

**FREE**

SA's OWN GARDENING AND LANDSCAPING MAGAZINE

**SPRING 2014**

**South Australian**

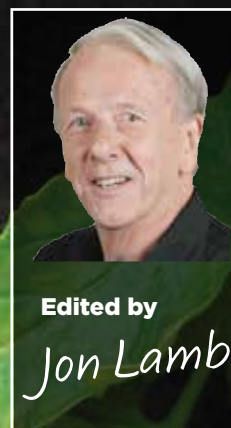
# **GARDEN** & OUTDOOR LIVING

**Trendy  
tumbling  
tomatoes**

**Dogs in  
the garden**

**Crab  
apple  
trees**

**Pastel  
colours  
for spring**



Edited by

*Jon Lamb*

**More BIG  
geraniums**

**Watering well**

**Mini gerberas**

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# GARDEN & OUTDOOR LIVING

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**OUR COVER:** New Cherry Fountain Tumbling tomato.





# What's new at your garden centre

The latest new products and plants available from leading SA garden centres



## Surfinia® Summer Double™ (hybrid petunia)

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## Snow Pea Combo

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## Golf Course Green lawn fertiliser

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## Gaura Belleza

The Belleza series has an upright, compact habit with numerous dark pink, light pink or white flowers on sturdy stems. A very drought and heat tolerant plant that flowers profusely from early summer to late autumn. The flowers are great bee and butterfly attractors. Height 30-40cm. Available from spring through to summer in 140mm pots. Living Colour Nursery ph 08 8287 1366



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## Chilli bite SAMBA

The latest to join the Chilli Bite series. It produces long, slender fruits that mature through shades of green, yellow, orange and red. Glossy green foliage. Medium culinary heat. Very suitable for indoor, outdoor decoration. [www.oasishorticulture.com.au](http://www.oasishorticulture.com.au)



## Eclipse slow release fertiliser

A new control release fertiliser blend to improve the flowering quality on roses and other flowering plants particularly when container grown. Feeds plants for up to four months. Technologies allow the nutrients to break down slowly, reducing losses through leaching. [www.brunningssa.com.au](http://www.brunningssa.com.au)





## Yates Thrive roses & flowers liquid plant food

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## Alstroemeria Rock and Roll

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## Lavender Sensation

A much improved Australian bred series of lavenders selected for their tolerance to heat and humidity. Compact, growing to 60cm, Spanish style with strong straight stems. [www.poplargo.com.au](http://www.poplargo.com.au)



## Lilium - Tiny Range

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## World Kitchen Seeds Range

A unique but very topical selection of vegetable and herb based seeds for home gardeners to produce their own regional cuisines. Packets include tips and links to recipe website. Full range available from Prospect Home and Garden Centre. [www.johnsons-seeds.com.au](http://www.johnsons-seeds.com.au)



## Celosia Intenz

An unusual form of celosia featuring numerous very small flower heads. These are held well above the foliage through summer and autumn. Excellent for cutting. Grows 35-40cm high. A sun lover with good drought tolerance. [www.united-nurseries.com.au](http://www.united-nurseries.com.au)



## Dianthus 'Memories'

Classic white carnation-like blooms with a distinctive fragrance. Long flowering, will repeat bloom if spent flower heads are removed. Very hardy. Plant sales will raise funds for Alzheimer's Australia. [www.pma.com.au](http://www.pma.com.au)



Bavaria



Clarissa



Early Blue

# High impact hydrangeas: ideal for smaller gardens

If you're looking for a feature plant that is naturally compact, medium sized with long lasting but very striking flowers then Tea Time hydrangea is sure to appeal.

Tea Time hydrangeas are the result of an exciting international breeding program to produce a new series of hydrangeas that will create strong visual impact when used as feature plants, particularly in today's smaller gardens and in containers.

Consider also using them for indoor decoration and then moving them to the patio or maybe planting in the garden.

Tea Time hydrangeas are traditional mophead cultivars that have been selected for their naturally compact habit and numerous flower heads.

Strong sturdy stems also help improve the plant's flowering display.

The mopheads are medium sized and range from traditional pinks and blues but also include white, bright red and an unusual blue bi-colour.

Flowering begins on old growth in late spring and continues through summer.

During late summer (from late January through February) hard pruning is recommended to help maintain the plant's shape and encourage new growth.

Be sure to prune by this time as the next season's flower buds are initiated in the autumn as the nights become cooler and the days grow shorter.

If you prune in the autumn or winter you may cut off some of next season's flower buds.

Tea Time hydrangeas can grow to 1.2m x 1.2m in ideal conditions. They do best in positions where they receive early morning sun, but are protected from harsh afternoon sun.

## Changing colours

It's worth knowing the colour of some (but not all) hydrangeas can be intensified or even changed.

To increase the intensity of blue hydrangeas, add aluminium sulphate (Yates Blueing Tonic).

This should be applied immediately after pruning, then monthly from

September to December. N.B. Exceeding recommended rates can affect plant health.

Most garden soils in SA are not suitable for growing blue hydrangeas because their highly alkaline pH prevents the uptake of aluminium and as a result, the flowers lose their blue colour.

However, you can grow blue Tea Time hydrangeas very successfully in a large container positioned in the shade.

This way you can control the pH of the potting mix to keep it in an acidic state (Yates Blueing Tonic will enable you to do this).

To increase the intensity of pink flowers, add a tablespoon (only) of garden lime to the soil late in winter and again early in autumn. ■

## Heynes Wholesale Nursery

*Plants grown by Heynes Wholesale Nursery are available from your local garden centre. The Nursery does not sell directly to the public.*



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# Trendy tumbling tomatoes

Red Profusion

**S**mall multi-coloured tomatoes on bushes that tumble or cascade from attractive containers will be the talking point of town this summer.

This is not just because they are trendy; the latest releases will have instant appeal for gardeners wanting to add colour and flavour to their gourmet salads.

They will also appeal to the growing number of gardeners who want to grow garden fresh vegetables but find space for traditional tall growing tomatoes at a premium.

These latest tomatoes have been selected for their ability to spread and trail rather than grow vertically.

This makes them ideally suited to growing in hanging baskets or over the side of a container.

The bushes spread or cascade 40-60cm but are capable of producing very high yields.

This is because they are known as determinant varieties i.e. the main branches grow to a pre-determined length and then

start producing side branches and fruits rather than further lateral growth.

The fruits generally are cherry or cocktail size and although early varieties were either red or yellow, they are now available in a range of eye catching multi colours that should have great appeal for gourmet gardeners.

Tumbling tomatoes are easy to grow providing the container is wide enough i.e. 30-40cm and the bushes are given regular watering and adequate fertiliser once the bushes start to flower.

Adding 20 percent compost to the potting mix before you start will help maintain moisture around the plant's root system during hot weather.

The bushes should be protected from tomato diseases by spraying with wettable sulphur (organic fungicide and insecticide) as soon as the plants begin to grow.

This should be followed up with an additional spray 6-8 weeks later.

The following varieties should be available from most garden centres:

## **Cherry Fountain**

(Gourmet Garden label) An impressive cascading variety with very high yield potential. The fruit are mid-sized and round (3-4cm) with a firm flesh and good flavour. Height – 15cm, spread – 90cm. Ideal for large containers or raised garden beds.

## **Corn Dog (trailing)**

Large, yellow cherry shaped fruits with sweet flavour. Produces a neat dense, trailing bush. High yielding.

## **Red Profusion (trailing)**

Small round scarlet coloured fruit (3-4cm). Excellent flavour. A neat compact mounding canopy with 360° branching.

## **Tumbling Tiger (trailing)**

A vigorous high yielding trailing tomato, only growing 30cm high but spreading or cascading 45cm. The fruits are plum shaped and red with striped markings. Excellent flavour, long harvest period. ■

Tumbling Tiger



Cherry Fountain



Corn Dog







# Indigo Ruby – a grafted tomato with a difference

**A**s a tomato, Indigo Ruby is in a class of its own. The colour of the fruits is quite amazing.

However, it's the development of tomatoes that have been specifically produced to include very high levels of anthocyanins, natural antioxidants found in berries, fruits and vegetables with purple skin that sets this tomato apart.

Indigo Ruby is a blend of healthy wild tomatoes and high yielding, superior tasting garden varieties.

The result is plum shaped fruits that start green and then turn red as they mature and reach cocktail size.

However, this doesn't fully describe what you will see as each fruit displays an intense indigo pigment wherever it has been exposed to direct sunlight.

(Immature fruit is often green and indigo

while the mature fruit is red and indigo).

The fruits grow in clusters of four to six while the flesh is sweet and very aromatic when ripe (don't pick too early to ensure a tasty balance of sugars and acid).

The high anthocyanin levels in this tomato give the fruit its purple colour.

Anthocyanins are in the class of flavonoids containing antioxidants and are of interest to scientists because of their potential health benefits.

Indigo Ruby will be available as a grafted tomato from selected garden centres during spring.

This tomato is the first in a series of 'Rich Pickings' grafted vegetables to be released in SA shortly.

Indigo Ruby is a relatively small bush (determinate) and won't get out of hand.

However, it will still need to be staked



so that the bush and heavy fruit set can be supported. It typically grows to 1.0m-1.2m high. Thinning out some of the early developing stems will allow the fruit to be exposed to greater light levels.

Supplies of Indigo Ruby may be limited early in the season. ■

## Grow your own tomatoes just for two

**W**hen there is only one or two at home or space in the garden is limited, you really don't need a full punnet of tomatoes.

Fortunately most garden centres sell well established tomato plants in single pots. When you buy, all the hard work of getting the plant started is over and you have also saved about six weeks in growing time.

Should you have room for more than one plant, it opens up the possibility of growing two or three different types.

Mighty Red is still one of the best, producing medium sized fruit with excellent taste. It is also one of the most disease resistant tomatoes currently available.

If your heart is set on picking tomatoes by Christmas, select an early maturing variety such as Burnley Gem or Apollo.

The small fruited cherry types also mature early and most have good disease resistance. For something a little different try one of the yellow fruiting varieties, or

Heritage varieties like Black Russian, a charcoal coloured tomato the size of an apricot, or Green Zebra with its green and yellow stripes.

The latter two have outstanding tomato taste but, sadly, not the added disease resistance available in the latest varieties.

### Grosse Lisse - still tops

If you're still unsure about what variety to grow, don't overlook long time favourite, Grosse Lisse. High yielding, adaptable and above all, real tomato taste.

If there is enough space for growing your plants in the garden, look for the sunniest position, somewhere where the plant will receive full sun for more than half the day.

Tomatoes also grow well in containers. As a general rule, the bigger the container the less work involved in keeping the plants watered.

Plastic pots are quite suitable but they should be at least 30cm in diameter with 45cm being ideal. ■



Grosse Lisse



# A planting plan for five raised beds



What herbs and vegetables can you grow in five raised garden beds? Herb specialist **MARIE COLLETT**, draws from her own experience.

**B**ed one is surrounded by trees and shrubs on the south and west. It is my shade bed.

The rhubarb is in the corner which receives the most afternoon shade and is thriving. I currently have kohlrabi planted in the sunny end and it's doing well.

This spring I will plant kale sprouts in the sunny end of the bed and under-plant them with leaf lettuce.

Kale sprouts grow on a stalk like Brussels sprouts so they will protect the rhubarb and the lettuce from the sun in the hottest weather.

The next two beds are probably my biggest suntrap so it makes



sense to plant the tomatoes in one bed and capsicums and egg plants in the other.

From a companion planting aspect, planting all these together is a little like laying out a landing strip for the pests so I will need to add some confusion by planting strong smelling herbs.

Basil will be ideal on the shady end of both beds. Thyme and tarragon will do well on the warmer and drier end of the beds.

Inter planting of dwarf French marigolds and nasturtiums will provide the yellow flowers to attract the flying insects away from the veg.

The flower heads of dill are a great nectar source for beneficial insects and will grow well with the capsicum and egg plants because the fern leaf will not create too much shade.

My must have two tomatoes are Tom Boy, a dwarf large fruit variety for table and of course, tomato sauce and Principe Borghese, an heirloom cherry Roma type that is vigorous, heavy cropping and absolutely delicious.

Bed four is a problem spot as it appears to be in a rain shadow.

Out with the tough guys – I'm going to try my luck with artichokes and fennel and some kale.

Black Toscana kale is best grown as a winter vegetable but I have seen Red Russian, and Combo Kale grown successfully throughout summer in Adelaide.

This may be the spot to plant some new chunky chives.

Bed five has asparagus planted and the far end of the bed receives the six hours of sun for successful strawberry growth.

That is where my new favourite strawberry 'Chandler' will take up residence and will become the pampered zone with plenty of water and fertiliser.

I am most excited about the Chandler strawberry as it's an heirloom variety producing sweet juicy fruit and is prized for its jam making qualities.

It's a day length sensitive variety so I am expecting lots of luscious tasty strawberries over summer.

The herbs of choice for this bed are parsley and lemon scented thyme planted around the edges so it's kept a little drier.

It could be said that I am spoiled for choice and space.

However, I could fill another five beds without trouble.

Let's celebrate the space available to us, choose what we want to grow based on our needs and those of the plants and enjoy. ■

*Marie Collett is co-director at Falgs Nurseries, SA's first registered sustainable plant nursery and SA growers for Herb Herbert Herbs.*

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# Geraniums are BIG this spring



PinkTastic

**M**ove over Big Red – Big Burgundy has arrived, adding an exciting new dimension to the geranium palette this spring.

## Big Burgundy

Like its two predecessors, Big Red and Big Pink, Big Burgundy features very large blooms with very intense colour – in this case, dark burgundy.

These are held high over dark green foliage that has a very pleasing semi-trailing yet

mounded habit.

The plants have very high tolerance to heat and drought and have been selected for their adaptability to container growing particularly hanging baskets and window boxes.

However, they also look great when massed together in the garden.

## Watch out for Big Rose

Big Rose, the fourth member in this new geranium series, will also be released this

spring. However, supplies are likely to be limited.

The feature of Big Rose includes very large, semi double, deep rose blooms held high over green foliage. Long flowering period and excellent tolerance to heat.

## That's PinkTastic

PinkTastic is a fund raising geranium with hot pink blooms that sit tall and strong above dark green foliage.

Like other 'new wave' geraniums, it produces a mounding habit that looks great in a container.

PinkTastic has excellent heat tolerance with its large eye catching blooms, produced over an extended growing period.

A royalty of 20 cents per label is being donated to the National Breast Cancer Foundation.

## Guide to good growing

Built into the breeding of these new wave geraniums is an ability to produce a very large number of very uniform flowers over an extended period.

The plants also have an ability to respond quickly to regular feeding and (during hot weather) watering.

The result is a series of plants that will flower from late winter and continue through to the following early winter.

However, it's important not to over-water geraniums and allow the potting mix to dry slightly in between watering.

The plants should receive a quality fertiliser in spring and again late in summer.

Some gardeners also apply a liquid



Big Burgundy







Big Red and Big Pink

organic fertiliser on a monthly basis to their plants during the main growing period (October-May).

During prolonged wet weather, geranium blooms can be affected by a blossom rot.

Removing affected blooms as soon as the fungus is noticed will stop the infection from moving to other plants.

The plants will quickly produce new blooms.

However, if protection is needed, spray the plants with a broad fungicide such as mancozeb. ■



Big Rose



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# Camellias happy to be grounded



Camellias will look great growing in the ground if you follow camellia authority **JON HALL's** simple steps to success.

**N**ow is not the time to remove old-fashioned camellias from your list of favourite garden shrubs. During the past decade, camellias have shown how well they adapt to our variable climate, particularly if they are to be grown in the ground.

Five simple steps to growing camellias in the ground:

## 1. Choose your planting site carefully.

- Camellias grow best in semi-shade but will tolerate full shade given reasonable light. The southern side of a house or the southern wall of a pergola is ideal.

- Good drainage is essential. For hard or clay soils, consider growing your plants in a bed raised 15-20cm above ground level. Sleepers or bricks will provide a useful border.

## 2. Add organic matter before you plant.

- Aim at achieving a soil that contains at least 15 and up to 25 percent decomposed organic matter. Well-made compost is ideal

but for large plantings, consider buying a trailer-load of composted pine bark (also available by the bag).

## 3. Go easy on the fertiliser.

- Camellias by nature are slow growing plants. Trying to speed up their development with fertiliser will be counter-productive. Top dress newly established plants with a slow release fertiliser and then renew application each spring. Alternatively, add blood and bone when planting and maybe add chicken manure pellets with added potash when you mulch the ground in spring.

## 4. Mulching is essential.

- A thick layer of mulch applied in mid spring each year will ensure the plant's root system stays cool and working effectively. It will also conserve moisture. Chipped tree prunings, pea straw or lucerne are all useful materials. Mulching also increases humidity underneath the plants and helps reduce the plant's stress levels during hot weather.

## 5. Water wisely.

- Camellias have a very fibrous root system close to the surface for gathering nutrients and moisture. However, when grown in the ground, they also have deeper roots that draw moisture from the sub-soil during hot weather. During warm to hot weather, the bushes will need deep watering regularly i.e. weekly during the hot weather.

Drip irrigation is suitable providing the emitters are spread evenly over the root systems. Tricklers that emit 6-8 short squirts of water work well. If you are using in-line drip hose, you will need to arrange the hose so that there are at least four and up to eight emitters per bush. As a guide a mature 2-3m high bush will need 40-60 litres of water per week during hot weather.

## Camellias worth growing

The following varieties suggested by Jon Hall from specialist camellia nursery Newmans Nursery, are well worth considering.

Hardy, reliable old favourites:

C.j. Emperor of Russia, red informal double flowers, upright plant, dark leaves.

C.j. Debutante, all time favourite, full informal double soft pink, tall bushy growth, pale green foliage. Long flowering.

C.j. Lovelight, very large semi double, pure white blooms yellow stamens. Strong open growth.

C. j. Great Eastern, large semi double crimson red flowers, regular growth habit. Useful for espaliering.

C.j. Volunteer, wine coloured peony-shaped flowers with beautiful white markings to the petal edge. Open upright growth. ■

*Jon Hall is managing director,  
Newman's Nursery, Tea Tree Gully.*



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### Garden workshop program



Sep 21 <sup>st</sup>	10am	<b>Growing heirloom tomatoes</b>
Sep 21 <sup>st</sup>	12noon	<b>Growing in containers, raised beds and wicking beds</b>
Oct 19 <sup>th</sup>	10am	<b>Ornamentals in the garden</b>
Oct 19 <sup>th</sup>	12noon	<b>Pest &amp; disease management the natural way</b>
Nov 16 <sup>th</sup>	10am	<b>Summer pruning your garden</b>
Nov 16 <sup>th</sup>	12noon	<b>Backyard chooks</b>

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*Rhapsiolepis* 'Apple Blossom'

## Pastel colour improved by spring



There are good reasons to have plants with pastel colour flowering in your garden through spring. **KATHY ERREY** explains.

**O**n beautiful spring days, pastel colours in the garden are improved by the gentle levels of light without a washout effect from the harsh hot summer sun.

Shades of pale pinks, mauves, lemons and whites against a background of green grass, emerging fresh leaves on deciduous trees, fragrant tree blossoms and blue skies all add to the romance of the spring garden.

Take advantage of the four distinct seasons of our South Australian climate to add interest and variety to your garden and choose plants that change or come-and-go with the seasons.

The flowering crab apple, *Malus ionensis* 'plena' is a beautiful tree suited to small gardens that produces an abundance of mildly fragrant, pale pink flowers in spring that changes with the seasons.

Irises will give a stunning display of flowers in spring and many pastel colours are available. At other times of the year, you'll hardly notice these plants.

Groundcovers available in soft colours are dwarf carnations, verbenas and rock daisy *Brachyscome*.

Bulbs in pastels, like common bluebells and pale yellow daffodils add seasonality to the spring garden. Shirley poppies *Papaver Rhoeas* will produce large pale pink



*Felicia angustifolia*

flowers on stems about 90cm tall. These are annuals and grow easily and quickly from seed.

Add to this, flowering shrubs in pastels. The following are some of my favourites for their generous production of flowers in spring:

Persian lilac *Syringa persica* is a hardy, drought tolerant, deciduous shrub with lovely soft, lilac scented, mauve flower heads.

This variety of lilac is more tolerant of warmer winters than others. It grows to about 3m tall by 3m in width and supplies beautiful fragrant bouquets for the house.

An old fashioned favourite is the Marguerite daisy *Argyranthemum frutescens* but modern varieties have been bred to stay compact to suit our smaller gardens and produce more flowers over longer periods.

Dwarf varieties are available in a range of pinks, yellows and whites. They make a stunning display and, other than deadheading, pruning is not now required to maintain a good shape.

In spring, *Felicia angustifolia* is very showy, covered in a mass of tiny, mauve daisy-like flowers with yellow centres. It likes a hot, full sun position and is tough.

The rest of the year it is a tidy, unspectacular, small shrub with tiny green leaves growing to 60cm in height to 1m in width.

Indian Hawthorn is a hardy, slower growing, evergreen shrub with leathery, dark green, glossy leaves and pretty white or pink blossoms in spring lasting about six weeks.





The variety, *Raphiolepis* 'Apple Blossom' produces darker pink flowers and grows to 1m x 1m, whereas *Raphiolepis indica* 'Springtime' grows to 2m x 2m with paler pink flowers.

'Oriental Pearl' is another, growing to 1m x 1m in a rounded shape, making it a natural choice planting en masse for a ball effect.

Tolerant of salt spray, *Raphiolepis* can be used in coastal gardens or beside salt-water pools.

It prefers a full sun to partly-shaded position and can be pruned to shape, if required, immediately after flowering finishes.

A spring flowering shrub that thrives in a hot, dry climate with full sun is the rock rose *Cistus* 'Bennett's White', its flowers resembling those of the old fashioned single roses.

These plants originate from a Mediterranean climate and so suit South Australia's conditions of hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters.

Varieties are also available in various



*Cistus* 'Bennett's White'

shades of pink and in semi-prostrate mounding forms or erect, tall shrubs to about a metre.

Fertilise in spring to maximise growth, mulch before the hot summer sun arrives and water effectively over the summer to

ensure your plants perform to their best.

Happy gardening! ■

*Kathy Errey is a passionate gardener with many years experience in growing both new and traditional plants.*

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# Crab apple trees firm favourites



There are sound reasons why crab apple ornamental trees should continue to be widely planted in SA, says **SAM LUKE**.



M. Gorgeous



M. Ioensis Plena



M. Profusion



M. Tschonoskii



M. Trilobata autumn leaves

**C**rab apple trees (*Malus* species) are hardy, easy to grow and ideally suited to most of SA's soils and climates. But, it is their ornamental features that make these trees so popular in all kinds of gardens.

Crab apples produce masses of pink, white or red flowers in spring, followed by distinctive red 'crabs' or mini apples that hang on the trees well into winter. In autumn, the trees can also be relied on for a great display of autumn colour.

Crab apples come in a large range of shapes and sizes and most of these are very suited for growing in smaller gardens.

The trees are generally problem free, although in the cooler wetter districts, black spot fungus can sometimes cause problems and a preventative fungicide spray at bud burst may be warranted.

#### M. Gorgeous (3x3m)

Always popular because of its relatively small shape and size. In spring, you can

expect a great display of pink buds opening to white flowers, followed by very attractive red fruits that are ideal for crab apple jelly.

#### M. Ioensis Plena (Bechtel Crab Apple) (6x4.5m)

This is the traditional home gardener favourite producing numerous slightly scented double light pink to white flowers in spring. Not so many crabs but the leaves are showy with serrated edges. One of the best for red and yellow autumn leaf tones.

#### M. Profusion (6x4m)

A more upright spreading tree with a particularly attractive early season display which starts with red buds that cover the canopy and open to large wine-red flowers. This display is followed by large red fruits. In addition, the serrated leaves are also red, turning bronze green through summer and autumn.

#### M. Tschonoskii (7x4m)

One of two great upright but narrow forms, making it ideal where space for

gardening is at a premium. The canopy is diamond-shaped while the leaves are a unique silver green. In spring pale pink buds open to white and are followed by attractive yellow green fruits. Expect very attractive red to orange and yellow leaves in autumn.

#### M. Trilobata (4.5x2m)

This is an upright conical shaped crab apple with very distinctive maple-like lobed leaves. The foliage is deep green, turning to brilliant red in autumn. Another great choice when space in the garden is limited.

N.B. Trees sizes are maximum under ideal conditions and may take many years to achieve. ■

*Sam Luke is a fruit tree specialist and manages Balhannah Nurseries, fruit and ornamental tree supplier to SA garden centres.*

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# Feeding plants while you water

**N**ew technology is now available that will allow home gardeners to feed their plants while they are being watered.

Known as fertigation, this technology is widely used in commercial agriculture and horticulture to deliver plant nutrients and other supplements such as soil wetters.

Because it allows the user to deliver very small quantities i.e. parts per million of nutrients, as well as large amounts i.e. grams per litre, fertigation is rapidly being used to provide plant nutrients for landscapes in home gardens, school grounds, council gardens, golf courses and sporting facilities.

While the concept of fertigation probably started with home gardeners mixing fertiliser in a watering can, small home garden size purpose-built fertiliser delivery



tanks are now available commercially from specialist irrigation stores.

These ensure the nutrients are mixed correctly from the tank into the hose and delivered at the correct rate.

The delivery tanks operate from click on hose fittings attached to a tap and the nutrients delivered via your hose where the diluted nutrient is sprayed over the target plants.

This allows the nutrients to be absorbed directly through the plant's leaves. Access to these nutrients is immediate.

In essence, fertigation provides plants with a continuous supply of nutrients but in very small amounts.

The delivery tanks are available from specialist irrigation stores and they are able to use all forms of water soluble or liquid fertiliser. ■

## Argyranthemum *La Rita*



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# Long flowering gerberas now mini sized

**M**ini gerbera plants producing mini flowers and growing in mini containers – now that's a good idea.

The latest series of mini gerberas now includes a very unusual but eye catching Mini Spider gerbera that will be released in South Australia during spring.

Mini gerberas really are mini in size with the plant only growing 10-12cm high and the flowers 5-7cm wide.

Because gerberas adapt well to growing indoors, the result is a very attractive small flowering plant that is ideally suited for desktops at work or placing on the windowsill at home.

They also look good group planted in an attractive container to provide a splash of colour for your patio or outdoor living room.

The spider-like petals on Mini Spider are unique and available in a range of bright colours.

Meanwhile, standard gerberas are becoming fashionable again.

And why not, as the number of flowers per plant and the size of the flowers have been increased considerably, as well as the number



Mini Spider

of flowers produced throughout the season.

In South Australia, gerberas should begin flowering early in spring and continue through until late autumn (and often longer). Most of the latest gerberas sold in garden centres are seed grown – this helps contain costs and are designed largely for short term container growing.

If you're looking for high performing plants to grow in the garden, the latest forms of gerbera are likely to be more suitable.

They are perennial and have much greater tolerance to the main fungal diseases that can affect gerberas.

Gerberas that are container grown are great plants for short term indoor decoration (providing the light is bright).

They are also widely used to add colour on patios, verandahs and the outdoor living room.

Gerberas do best in full sun and in a container should be grown in a quality potting mix.

In the garden, the soil must also be well drained for plants grown in a raised bed.

The plants should be fertilised early in spring and again towards the end of summer and watered regularly during the warmer months.

However, it's important to reduce watering in late autumn and winter. ■

## Reminders

### Don't rush

Spring on the calendar does not always coincide with spring in the garden. If the plants could talk, they would probably be saying 'don't rush it, the ground is still cold and wet following winter and we're not quite ready to grow.' The essential message is to delay the planting of heat loving vegetables, flowers, shrubs and even new lawns for a few weeks until the sun has had time to warm the ground.

A few hours spent in the garden in the next few weeks will save hours of heartache and backache in the months ahead.



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Kalanchoe Queen Magic Purple



## Kalanchoe Queens winning many hearts

**Y**es they are succulents but they are also very attractive. Through clever breeding, Kalanchoe Queens produce masses of single and double flowers that hold their colour for nine months of the year.

As such, they lend themselves to a range of decorating ideas including inside and outdoors in small decorator pots or grouped together to make a great splash of colour.

Kalanchoes thrive in a wide range of temperature and light conditions. In full sun, the leaves turn reddish and the flower colour will intensify. However, indoors they hold their colour well, particularly if the light is bright.

Being succulents they have excellent tolerance to dry conditions and it is best to keep the potting mix on the dry side. Fertiliser is not required.

There are five varieties in the current season including:

- Megan Double Red
- Sunshine Double Yellow
- African Fall Double Orange
- Jodie Double Pink
- Magic Double Purple



Kalanchoe Queen African Fall

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# Black Widows – daisies with a difference

**W**hen you need long term colour in the garden but there's little time to provide loving care and attention, it's worth checking out the current range of Elite osteospermums.

The Elite series has been selected to produce very compact plants, 30-40cm high and up to 50cm wide.

As such, they are ideal for growing as a border or a general plant in the garden.

There are currently nine in the Elite osteospermum series and all have been selected for their ability to perform in South Australian soils and hot dry summer.

The end result is attractive, hardy, drought tolerant plants that are particularly suited to growing in smaller gardens.

## Talking of Black Widows

During recent flower trials in SA, the osteospermum everyone was talking about is a new variety called Black Widow.

Black Widow's flowers are most unusual with whorls of spoon-shaped petals that are deep purple turning almost black in winter.

These surround large purple anemone centres.

The blooms appear on strong short stems



and like others in the Elite series, flower almost all year round with the best displays in spring and autumn.

All osteospermums are sun lovers and thrive with little attention. ■

*The Elite range of osteospermums is grown by Poplar Grove Nursery and is available from your local garden centre.*

[www.poplargo.com.au](http://www.poplargo.com.au)

# Pretty pink hebes deliver colour in the shade

**S**mall compact shrubs that flower freely in part shade and look good all year round are always in demand.

This spring, a new and very attractive hebe 'Pretty in Pink' will be available from garden centres in SA because of its wide garden appeal including an ability to flower in part shade over an extended period.

Pretty in Pink is an evergreen shrub that only grows 30cm high but spreads up to 90cm wide.

While the leaves are dark green, the growing tips are always deep burgundy.

During the colder months, the foliage

darkens in colour to a metallic aubergine and then to deep reddish brown.

Another feature involves short racemes of light pink flowers that emerge early in autumn and continue through to the end of winter.

Hebes including Pretty in Pink thrive in full sun or part shade and tolerate a wide range of garden soils.



The bushes should be trimmed lightly after flowering to maintain an attractive shape.

Apply a quality organic fertiliser in spring and for top results, water regularly through the warmer months. ■

*Hebe Pretty Pink is grown by Poplar Grove Nursery and is available from your local garden centre.*





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# Controlling thatch in your lawn



Lawn specialist **STEFAN PALM** explains how different types of lawn require different management to get on top of thatch.

I often get asked by people in my shop, "Why does my lawn go white or brown every time I mow it". The simple answer is that the lawn has too much thatch in it.

Thatch is present in all couch, kikuyu and buffalo lawns and needs to be 'managed'.

Thatch is the exposed root system of the lawn that grows above the surface.

You'll know you have it if your lawn feels spongy under foot. It's not necessarily a bad thing but it can be hard to keep the lawn green if there is too much.

The blades on a couch, kikuyu and buffalo lawn generally only grow an average of 10-30mm long. The remainder is thatch.

For example, if your grass is 100mm long, the first 75mm will be thatch, the top 25mm will be blades of lawn.

If you cut more than 25mm of length off your lawn, you will expose the thatch underneath. This is where that brown or white colour comes from after mowing.

The best way to manage thatch is not to let it build up in the first place.

When most people experience a discolouration after mowing, their first response is to raise the height of the mower.

This works for a while but in effect it compounds the problem. It doesn't take long for the lawn to catch up which means you have to raise the mower again.

This cycle repeats itself until you can't go any higher on your mower.

If you notice that you are scalping your lawn when you mow it, instead of raising the height of the mower, mow more often.

If you already have too much thatch, then spring is the best time to tackle it.

Different lawns require different approaches.

For kikuyu and couch lawns, you can engage a mowing contractor to scarify it for you or simply mow it down to ground level yourself.

This in effect removes all the thatch (scarifying goes one step further by thinning out the underground roots).

Your lawn will go brown for a few weeks but will come back with a beautiful green cover and very little thatch.

You can then settle on the height you want to keep it at and manage it with the approach mentioned above.

When it comes to removing thatch in buffalo, you can't scarify or scalp it to the ground. If you do, you will kill it. It's a much slower process with this type of lawn involving lowering your mower one notch at a time.

Allow it to recover and regain its colour, then do it again. The ideal height for buffalo is 40-50mm high - I would never



mow below this height.

The most common reasons for thatch build up are not mowing often enough, excessive fertilising and excessive watering.

## Lawn reminders

What to do in spring:

► Fertilise with a mineral fertiliser with iron and trace elements but resist the urge to do it too early. Wait till mid to late spring for best results.

► Control broadleaf weeds with a liquid broadleaf

selective herbicide.

The best time is a week or so after fertilising for best results.

► Control excessive thatch. If required, do this two to three weeks after fertilising towards the end of spring when it's really starting to heat up.

► If beetles have been a problem for you, apply an imidacloprid based beetle grub killer in mid October.

It will last in the soil for three months, breaking the breeding cycle. ■

*Stefan Palm is a lawn consultant with Paul Munns Instant Lawn.*

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# An attractive and productive small garden is achievable

By **GEORGINA HORE**

**T**he 'quarter acre block' is fast becoming a relic. The growing trend of living in apartments and townhouses means the traditional big backyard is being downsized. Smaller garden areas, courtyards, balconies and rooftop terraces are now both popular and a reality.

Accompanying this, however, is still the desire to create a space that is both functional and aesthetically appealing; a place to relax and unwind and for many, the potential to grow their own garden fresh food.

How can this be achieved when space is at a premium?

Incorporating both the elements of attractiveness and productivity takes careful planning and design holds the key.

There are three keys to achieving this.

## Layering and multi-function areas

Layering materials and plants, as well as creating 'rooms' or multi-function areas can increase the visual depth and make spaces seem larger than they really are. Award winning principal landscape designer with Adelaide Garden Design, Nadia Matijevic, says layering planting with the varied textures of foliage will also add interest and form.

"For example, if you are growing annual varieties of vegetables, plant small evergreens in the foreground and larger ones in the background and place the seasonal plants in between," she says.

Some varieties that should be considered include rainbow chard, beetroot, red cabbage, lettuce and chillies, all of which will all add that splash of colour and texture.

These can also be incorporated amongst ornamental plants to add further interest.

"Creating alcoves can also give an illusion of greater depth but they also form small



An espalier is a great way to save space in the garden and can be used to grow both ornamental and productive plants.

intimate areas and an ideal place for a seat," Nadia says.

"If the seat is cantilevered it will appear to float and give a feeling of space as well as providing an opportunity for planting beneath".

Shelving can be added to a wall as a focal point and this will create additional space for pots of herbs without taking up valuable ground space.

Adding areas that are used for more than one function also creates the feeling of extra space in your garden.

Herbs such as thyme, oregano or prostrate rosemary are perfect for small areas, and their aromatic scents will provide a tranquil area as well as be useful in the kitchen.

## Plant choice

Possibly the most crucial aspect in designing a small productive and attractive garden involves the correct selection of plants.

There is certainly a range of productive plants that can be substituted for ornamentals in your garden. Consider hedges of feijoa that thrive with little water and make a lovely dense hedge yet still provide plenty of fruit.

Manager of The Conservatory Garden & Home, Lynne Ishak, suggests that small fruit trees like quince, persimmon and pomegranates are good examples as they are attractive while also producing fruit.

"Citrus trees like lemons or limes are perfect choices because you can grow them in tubs or wine barrels," she says.

"You can also incorporate the art of the espalier, training a plant to grow laterally on a wall or a lattice."

Espaliering passionfruit, grapevines, kiwi fruit, Chilean guava, scarlet runner beans as well as a variety of fruit trees can certainly save space.

## Simplicity is key

Professional landscape designers are quick to point out that any space you design should not be overwhelming and include conflicting items or too many focal points.

Keeping it simple is critical. Establishing clean lines with oversized pots and large pavers can create a sophisticated, stylish look without cluttering the space. Fibreglass containers not only look attractive, they are light and so easy to move and maintain and they can also be painted.

Consider also the height of any structures such as pergolas and umbrellas. If they are too low the space can appear disproportionate and oppressive. ■

*Georgina Hore is studying journalism at the University of South Australia.*



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# SA's disappearing plant choice



**TREVOR NOTTLE** is concerned about South Australia's disappearing plant choice and asks – does anyone care?

**G**o and ask at your local garden centre; they'll have terrific local knowledge about plants for your area. That is advice often heard on radio gardening talk-back programs.

True enough perhaps but increasingly problematic.

Do you have a local garden centre?

Or do you have a local hardware store or DIY mega-store that includes a green-life department?

What quality of local knowledge will you find there?

I often have to wonder. The assistants in the Big Barn stores are trained in general retail sales, and they are hired to sell things, anything – light bulbs, paint brushes, BBQs, plumbing supplies, building supplies or just perhaps plants depending on how the manager decides to balance out the work rosters.

A recent trip into the country gave me cause for concern. I saw veg seedlings, bare-root fruit trees and roses, packets of summer bulbs and perennials for sale.

And alongside I saw magnolias in bud, a few rhododendrons, Japanese maples and plenty of flowering azaleas.

Any experienced gardener with local knowledge would know that these plants have little chance of surviving their first summer once planted out.

What was happening here? I saw such unlikely plants literally walking out of the check-outs.

Why would customers buy plants almost certainly condemned to die?

Pretty pictures on the labels are there to help sales and retail shop assistants are trained to sell, and that is what they do.

They are not employed to give advice



against buying products offered for sale, including plants.

It's a worry to me. I like to see home gardeners experience success in growing plants not failure.

How do such unsuitable plants arrive in-store?

Mostly they come from wholesale growers in the Dandenongs or Blue Mountains where cool climate acid loving plants grow happily and thrive.

They are purchased by a buyer for the business group that runs the retail outlets. The buyer works from HQ based in Melbourne, Sydney or even Perth and they buy on price and in bulk with little thought given to product survivability across the climatic range found in the settled areas of the nation.

It's a business decision about bulk buying power, national distribution and point-of-sale impulse purchasing on the part of customers.

Of course there are guaranteed guarantees; if plants die they can be taken back and will be replaced. But who bothers? It is only a dead plant after-all.

What is the alternative? Value minded customers can shop with their feet and patronise plant outlets where a more appropriate range of climate and soil compatible plants are on offer.

Well, that's the theory but looking around it is very plain that independent nurseries are few, and getting fewer as ever rising land values and stiff competition on price force many small owner-operator retail nurseries to close.

2015 will see the opening of three Masters mega-stores around Adelaide. This will simply reinforce the same old same old choices.

Direct competition will most likely have a very serious impact on smaller nursery franchises and family businesses.

What to do to ensure choice is maintained?

Why not a collective outlet for specialist growers? It has been tried before at Reynella, but maybe the business model was wrong.

'Collectors Corner' in Melbourne could provide a better business model; a proper restaurant and a separate café, specialist book and gift store for gardeners, ample parking, near city location, under-cover space and facilities for wedding receptions, events AND half-a-dozen specialist nurseries displaying high quality, high value plants in sales areas with high standards of presentation.

Knowledgeable plants-people are on hand to give advice and take care of business; a model that has worked extremely well for more than 30 years.

What is more it caters brilliantly for a great diversity of multi-cultural gardening interests that include bonsai, orchids, bromeliads, tillandsias, cacti, succulents, cycads and rare ferns.

All is not lost, gardeners of Adelaide. Is there a plant-minded entrepreneur out there wanting to answer the need? ■





Kate Princess Lily

## Make room for Kate and Claire

**M**eet Kate and Claire. You will find them both looking very glamorous at your local garden centre.

Kate and Claire are in fact the latest varieties to be released in the current range of Princess Lilies. Kate is a stunner with superb bright red flowers that cover a very compact canopy of light green leaves. Claire, on the other hand, is smothered with large, clean soft white flowers that are much improved forms of alstroemerias.

Kate and Claire flower profusely and will bloom for anything up to nine months of the year.

Unlike the traditional alstroemerias with their long and at times untidy flowering stems, Princess Lilies are very compact (30-40cm). While this makes them ideal for container growing, they also perform very well as edging or feature plants in the garden.

The flowering period for Princess Lilies is typically autumn through to spring with spot flowering in summer. In SA, plants particularly those growing in containers benefit from light shading during the hotter part of summer.

Because of their ability to flower, Princess Lilies respond quickly to regular feeding with a balanced fertiliser that has a high potash content. They will also respond well to regular watering during warm conditions. However, it is important that they are not over-watered, particularly during the cooler months. ■

*Princess Lilies are grown in SA by Adelaide Plant Growers and available from your local garden centre.*

*More information contact APG phone (08) 8384 7176.*

Claire Princess Lily



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Sunny Days



Super Duper



Superior Purple

## Decor daisies for the outdoor living room

**F**our new Federation Daisies are capturing hearts when it comes to decorating the outdoor living room.

Federation Daisies are the result of a dedicated plant breeding program that has changed the much loved but rather old fashioned marguerite daisy into a very compact, long flowering easy care plant.

While the extensive colour range has been a major feature of the Federation range, with the latest releases, it's the size of the blooms that will catch your eye with flowers 50 percent bigger than the typical Federation Daisy.

- ▶ Super Duper White has very large, bright, clear white flowers on a self-cleaning compact bush.
- ▶ Superior Purple – large neat carmine petals in double rows, surrounding a slightly raised yellow centre.
- ▶ Sublime Pink – very large, double rowed pink petals with yellow centre.
- ▶ Sunny Days – features blooms with a



Sublime Pink

very large bright white anemone centre surrounded by soft yellow petals.

All four daisies are easy care plants, have high disease tolerance with flowering continuing from autumn through winter and well into spring. However, it's the small compact shape of the bushes (60cm x

80cm) that makes them ideal for container growing and in particular decorating the patio or outdoor living room. While individual plants look great growing in a feature container, they also look good positioned beside steps, located either side of an entrance way or grouped together to make an eye catching splash of colour.

In SA, Federation Daisies should be grown in full sun through autumn, winter and spring but relocated to a well lit but lightly shaded position through the heat of summer.

The plants need little in the way of maintenance, although a light trim after each flush of flowers will encourage the plants to remain bushy and produce strong new growth. ■

*Federation Daisies are grown in SA by Adelaide Plant Growers and available from your local garden centre.*

*More information contact APG phone (08) 8384 7176.*



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# Growing vegetables in containers

**Y**es, you can grow your own fresh vegetables in the confined space of a courtyard.

All you need is sunshine and a range of suitable containers.

Tomatoes, capsicums, cucumbers and zucchinis are particularly rewarding as they are all capable of being harvested over an extended period.

Lettuce, silverbeet and small cabbage are very easy to grow and in the cooler districts, you will find climbing beans productive.

Where possible, choose the sunniest section of the courtyard.

Vegetables need direct sun for at least six hours of the day if they are to grow successfully.

Containers come in all shapes and sizes. Those made of black plastic are the most durable.

If appearance is not a problem, polystyrene fruit boxes available for a few dollars each at your local greengrocers are useful because of their size.

Large terracotta containers are certainly more attractive, but they are rather expensive. Plastic 'terracotta lookalikes' may be a good compromise.

When it comes to selecting your container, err on the large size.

It's possible to grow tomatoes and capsicums in a 30cm diameter container, but you will be driven mad during hot weather, trying to keep the plants supplied with water. Look at nothing smaller than 45cm diameter.

A large container gives the plants' roots plenty of room to grow while allowing the soil to store a reasonable quantity of moisture.

It's surprising how much water a mature tomato or cucumber will use on a hot day and if they run short on a hot day when you're not around, they will quickly turn up their toes and die.

Premium grade potting mix may be ideal for growing ornamental plants in a container but it tends to dry out too rapidly when growing vegetables.

Adding up to 30 percent well-made compost will overcome the problem. If you don't make your own, it is readily available

at most garden centres.

Garden soil is not acceptable in a large container, unless it drains very freely and has plenty of composted organic matter incorporated.

The key to growing vegetables in

containers is to make sure the potting mix is kept moist but not soggy wet.

Tall growing plants such as tomatoes and climbing beans will need some form of support. Tomato stakes are ideal and should be in place before you start planting. ■

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# Spring garden guide

Jon Lamb's seasonal checklist

## Vegetable planting guide

Vegetable	Early	Late	Seed	Seedling	Small container	50% shade summer	Ease
Beans dwarf	-	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	••
Beetroot	✓	✓	✓	-	✓		•••
Broccoli	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	•••
Cabbage small hybrid	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	•••
Capsicum		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	••
Carrots	✓	✓	✓	✓			•••
Cucumber		✓	✓	✓		✓	•••
Eggplant		✓	✓	✓			•
Lettuce hearting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	•••
Lettuce non-hearting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	•••
Melon		✓	✓	✓			••
Onions	✓			✓	✓		••
Peas	✓		✓		✓	✓	••
Pumpkins		✓	✓				••
Radish	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	•••
Rocket	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	•••
Silverbeet	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	•••
Sweetcorn		✓	✓				••
Tomatoes		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	•••
Zucchini		✓				✓	•••
••• easy							

## Bulbs

Bulbs about to bloom will benefit from an application of a complete fertiliser (a measuring cup to a square metre). Bulbs that have finished flowering should not be disturbed until the leaves die down naturally as the bulbs need time to restore energy for next year's growth.

## Citrus

As citrus trees mature, they often become scraggy, particularly near the centre of the tree. Spring is a good time to remove old and dead wood from the tree. Take the opportunity to thin out the number of branches. This will allow more light to penetrate and increase the tree's cropping potential.

## Planting

Spring is an ideal time to establish both Australian and exotic trees and plants. It's also a good time for re-potting and moving plants from pots into the garden. However, don't rush the planting of annuals and vegetables. Seedlings or seed established in early October will grow just as well as those planted now. There is still value in covering the ground with clear plastic to warm the soil if you want to get plants established early.

## Feeding

Most plants will soon be bursting into new spring growth. If they haven't been fed with fertiliser lately, they will soon run short of nutrients. An application of a seaweed product followed by a balanced fertiliser containing nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus will benefit most plants.

## Quick colour

Annual	Early	Late	Display	Cutting	Sun	Semi shade	Wks in flower
Alyssum	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	20+
Amaranthus		✓	✓		✓		12+
Begonias	✓	✓	✓			✓	20+
Celosia dw.		✓			✓		12+
Cosmos dw.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		12+
Dahlia dw.		✓	✓	✓	✓		12
Dianthus dw.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	12
Impatiens		✓	✓			✓	12
Lobelia	✓	✓	✓			✓	12+
Marigold	✓	✓	✓		✓		12
Petunia	✓	✓	✓		✓		12+
Salvia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	16
Snapdragon dw.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	12
Sunflower dw.		✓	✓	✓	✓		12
Verbena		✓	✓		✓		12
Vinca		✓	✓		✓		10
Zinnia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		12+
Early = Sept Late = Oct, Nov							

# Don't Just Water Your Garden! Se

Seasol is safe to use on all plants including natives. It's a natural seaweed plant tonic, which stimulates healthier, faster growth. Seasol increases root development to help with plant establishment and helps to increase nutrient uptake so when plants are stressed, they can recover more quickly. Seasol provides stress protection against heat, drought and transplant shock and helps to rejuvenate sick plants.





## Crop Watch

Problem	What it looks like	Action
<b>Stone fruit</b>		
Leaf curl	Distorted leaves on peach and nectarine trees	Spray liquid copper or copper oxychloride at bud swell
Freckle	Small brown freckles on maturing apricots	Spray liquid copper or copper oxychloride at bud swell
Brown rot	Soft brown rots on maturing apricot and peach fruit	Spray liquid copper or copper oxychloride at bud swell
<b>Apples and pears</b>		
Black spot	Black spot on leaves and fruit during spring and autumn	Use Mancozeb as green leaf tips begin to emerge from buds
Codling moth	Small white grubs inside apples and pears	Apply Success two weeks after petal fall. Follow with monthly sprays
<b>Various</b>		
Powdery mildew (fruit trees, vegetables and ornamentals)	White powdery material on leaves, stems and later in the year, fruit	Spray when first established with milk (1 part milk, 10 parts water). If well established, spray with wettable sulphur
Cherry slug	Leaves of cherries and plums skeletonised	Apply Success only if large numbers are causing serious damage
<b>Citrus</b>		
Red scale	Small brown to reddish scales on fruit and leaves	Apply pest oil mid Oct. Follow with late Jan or early Feb spray where problem persists
<b>Vegetables and fruits</b>		
Slugs and snails	Night feeders that hide in container drainage holes and beneath dense groundcover plants. Numbers can build quickly	Very susceptible to spraying with coffee (one teaspoon to one litre of warm water). If using baits, use products non-toxic to animals
<b>Roses</b>		
Aphids	Green aphid populations can build rapidly on rose tips mid spring	Early populations are easily disturbed by squirting with water. Predators should then take over

## Weeds

Don't let large, flat weeds spoil your lawn. They are easily controlled by spraying with a selective weedicide containing MCPA. Some mixtures should not be used on lawns containing buffalo.

## Mulch

There is no better way to conserve moisture and keep your plants in good condition during the growing season than to cover their roots with a thick layer of mulch.

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PowerFeed is a dynamic organic based fertiliser and soil conditioner all in one. It's safe to use on all plants including natives. PowerFeed promotes vigorous growth, stimulates flowering and fruiting. It adds liquid compost to the soil, to stimulate microbial activity and promote good soil structure. PowerFeed is a fast acting liquid which goes to work immediately whether applied to the soil or foliage.

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# Feathered friends or pests?



Introduced birds aren't always welcome in South Australia's home gardens. **CHRIS DANIELS** explains how they got here.

**T**he first settlers liked Australia, but did feel that it could be improved. If only it was more like - well - England.

Perhaps they would not be so homesick if they could hear 'their' bird singing rather than the shrieking of parrots, the mournful call of the 'crow' (which is actually a raven) and the mocking laughter of the kookaburra.

By the middle of the 19th century Acclimatisation Societies had been formed in each of the eastern coastal colonies.

These societies were focussed on importing European animals into Australia. Some of these imports were undertaken initially for economic reasons (for example hares and rabbits for food and starlings and Indian Mynahs to control agricultural pests) but these introductions usually went badly wrong.

Foxes and hares were also imported for the sport of hunting.

However, some birds were imported simply for aesthetic or nostalgic reasons. These included sparrows, blackbirds, skylarks and finches. They are now common in suburban backyards.

The male House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) has a conspicuous grey crown, black face and throat. The female is slightly paler than the male and does not have the grey crown or black face.

House sparrows were introduced into Victoria between 1863 and 1870. This finch and its close relative, the Eurasian Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*), were imported as pets and were either deliberately or accidentally released.

It is unclear whether sparrows were introduced into South Australia or moved here by themselves from Victoria.

House sparrows are omnivorous, taking insects, spiders, berries, seeds, flower buds



House sparrows – just one of the non-native birds that have flourished in Australia.

and scraps of food discarded by humans.

A key reason for the rapid increase in numbers was the sparrows' ability to feed on such a wide variety of food sources.

Birds can enter school or business canteens in buildings to feed. Some birds live in food courts in shopping malls and can learn to activate automatic doors in order to gain entry.

Sparrows quickly made themselves at home and rapidly expanded in numbers to become a major pest.

With their dramatic increase in numbers, local people looked for ways to rid themselves of these small brown intruders that were committing wholesale destruction of gardens and orchards.

Sparrow clubs appeared wherever sparrow numbers exploded. These clubs organised the killing of birds and the collection of eggs and their members collected

the government bounty. Despite killing thousands of birds, these clubs ultimately were ineffective in halting the spread of the sparrow.

Sparrows occur in small to medium-sized groups, particularly where humans have established cities, towns or settlements. Sometimes sparrows are common in isolated townships often hundreds of kilometres from the next community. Sparrows may also form flocks which contain huge numbers of birds.

Two other finches, the European goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) and European Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*), were also introduced into South Eastern Australia and Tasmania by the relevant Acclimatisation Societies in the 1860s.

The European goldfinch is a widespread species in Europe, central Asia and northern Africa.



Originally restricted to urban areas, the European goldfinch is now found in settled areas, farmlands and weedy areas such as roadsides, railways and industrial wasteland and vacant blocks particularly if they are infested with Scotch Thistle.

Goldfinches are often seen in gardens and parks and around vineyards. European Greenfinches are found in grasslands, wastelands, coastal scrub and heathlands and in plantations.

It prefers farms, roadsides, parks and gardens, especially when breeding, and is common but inconspicuous in urban areas.

The blackbird (*Turdus merula*) was introduced from Europe and Asia by the Victorian and South Australian Acclimatisation Societies, first in Victoria in 1864 and then in South Australia in the early 1870s.

The male is the 'black' bird, with deep orange to yellow bill, a narrow yellow eyering and dark legs. The female is a brown bird, with some streaks or mottling, and has a dark bill and legs.

The blackbird is most often found in



The Indian Myna competes for nesting space and chases away native birds. ©iStock.com/Riaanvdb

urban areas and surrounding localities, but has also successfully moved into bushland habitats.

It is often seen in orchards, vineyards and gardens, as well as along roadsides and in parks. It is a ground and low shrub inhabiting bird and is often seen darting from bush to bush or digging in loose soil, leaf litter and mulch for insects, earthworms, snails, spiders, seeds and fruit.

It can be a pest in orchards, parks and gardens, and can destroy ground vegetation, particularly backyard vegetable patches.

Many Australians have typical European/English gardens with open lawns which favour the introduced birds, particularly blackbirds, Indian Mynas, sparrows and starlings.

It is not easy to discourage these birds.

However, growing native plants including trees, shrubs and grasses and having fewer non-native plants, particularly trees will make the garden less attractive to these birds.

It also helps to have smaller areas of lawn and more ground cover plants and mulch.

However, most importantly don't feed birds bread or large amounts of seed.

Bread and seed will attract large numbers of unwanted birds and not be of interest to natives. ■

*Chris Daniels is Presiding Member of the Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges NRM Board.*

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# Wetlands breathe life back into Onkaparinga floodplain

**T**ransforming decades old sludge lagoons into thriving wetlands takes a lot of good planning and attention to detail but the results have exceeded expectations.

Since 1971, wastewater (sewage) from the southern area of Adelaide was treated at the Christies Beach Wastewater Treatment Plant. The remaining product, 'sludge', was pumped to lagoons located on the banks of the Onkaparinga River at Noarlunga Downs, for drying, removal and recycling.

With the expansion of housing development in the area and a growing awareness of the environmental values of the floodplain environs, the State Government made a commitment to decommission the lagoons and rehabilitate the site.

After consulting the local community and undertaking a number of environmental investigations, SA Water decided to take the opportunity to convert the site to stormwater wetlands.

The wetlands filter and clean urban stormwater runoff improving the quality of the water before it enters the adjoining Onkaparinga River as well as provide habitat to wide range of local and migratory birds.

"The location provided a great opportunity to create a diverse range of dry land and aquatic habitat types", says Vegetation Services Officer Shaun Kennedy. "Earthworks have transformed the 16 ha site into various landforms that transition from open woodland and low shrubland down into riparian and ephemeral marsh along with little island refuges surrounded by open water".

Local indigenous plant species were selected and the plants organised into zones to match their requirements taking into account the topography, the various water depths and the anticipated drying pattern across each of the nine ponds.

This careful planning avoided the reliance on permanent irrigation and has seen



The Noarlunga Downs Wetland Sanctuary, where the flora is now flourishing. Birds and frogs are also returning.

rapid establishment of the plants since the majority of planting was completed in late 2013.

The project team worked hard to collect seed and cutting material from an unprecedented diversity of indigenous plants species.

While most wetland projects include around 35 plant species, the Noarlunga Downs Wetlands has 75 species established. The 187,000 seedlings planted were propagated by three local native plant nurseries (Indigeflora Nursery, Provenance Indigenous Plants and Greening Australia SA) supplemented by hand seeding of local native grasses.

"By packing the riparian and dry land zones with plenty of spreading groundcover species, we have created a layer of living mulch whereby the plants interlock to preserve soil moisture and reduce opportunities for nuisance weeds," says Shaun.

"Capping the whole site with a 150 mm layer of sandy loam selected for its low nutrient content has also reduced weed vigour and the local native plants just love it. As an added bonus, regular bird surveys have shown an incredible diversity of birds already using the site".

Community member and Chair of the Onkaparinga Estuary Water Quality Group, Val Lewin has been advocating for the health of the lower Onkaparinga for the past 25 years and was an important voice in getting the project off the ground. "I can't tell you just how happy we are about the wetland; the result far outweighed all expectations we had for the area. The Noarlunga Downs Wetland Sanctuary is magnificent. The flora is beautiful, and the fauna is establishing itself with many species of bird life and the frogs are also returning. The area is first class and a magnificent gateway to the adjacent wetlands and the Onkaparinga River National Park."

While the wetlands themselves have been established to provide a safe haven for wildlife and are not publically accessible, from January 2016, the public will be able to access to the site via a walking trail. The trail meanders through the terrestrial zone and provides the opportunity to take in the site with views across the entire area. ■

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# Bromeliads - do plant colours match their names?

By **ADAM BODZIOCH**

**M**ost garden club members and plant fanciers enjoy plants because of their colourful flowers. This is no different for the growers of bromeliads but with the addition that many bromeliads also have brightly coloured leaves and very unusual markings such as hieroglyphics and striations.

It has been said that bromeliads embrace all the colours of the rainbow.

Bromeliad hybridists attempt to reflect the colours and features of their plants by naming them accordingly.

Some, however, provide names that are to create interest and the sales of those plants.

Examples of recently registered plant names are *Tillandsia* Creation, *Billbergia* Hallelujah, *Neoregelia* Groucho, *Guzmania* Optima, *Vriesea* Montezuma's Gem and the spectacular bi-generic *X Neophytum* Galactic Warrior.

Do these plants actually live up to their names?

For example, are Creation or Hallelujah the work of a superior being? Is Groucho so named because it looks irritable? Is Galactic Warrior a futuristic plant?

Personally, I prefer to see a sound link between a bromeliad and its name.

With the current trend towards smaller gardens, the question is often asked, 'Are there smaller miniature bromeliads available that home gardeners can grow?'

The Bromeliad Society of South Australia is holding its Spring Show and Sales on Saturday October 25th, between 9am and 3 pm, and Sunday October 26th between 10am and 3 pm at the Maltese Cultural Centre, Beverley.

Entry is free as usual.

There will be many local growers available to provide advice and discuss the ideal growing conditions for potted bromeliads, which are very adaptable plants.

There will also be sound advice on how to mount *Tillandsias* (otherwise known as airplants) on to a variety of media including wood, stone, wire - almost anything. In addition, there will be books on bromeliads available as well as culture notes on how to best grow bromeliads for South Australian conditions. ■

*Adam Bodzioch is president of the Bromeliad Society.*

Bromeliad *Neoregelia* Groucho



Bromeliad *Tillandsia* Creation



Bromeliad *X Neophytum* Galactic Warrior

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# Plant Selector +

## A garden tool with a difference



Deciding what plants to grow in your garden is easy using this powerful online tool. **SHERYN PITMAN** explains how and why.

**H**ow do we decide what to plant? Some places are sunny, some are shady. Some are near the house or boundary. Some are protected from wind while others cop the full winter southerlies or summer northerlies.

One garden, one street and even one suburb can all have myriad micro-climates. With plants it is never a matter of one size fits all!

To help South Australian gardeners, the Green Infrastructure project team at the Botanic Gardens has developed an online database that assists with such dilemmas.

Called *Plant Selector +*, it contains well over 1,500 trees and other plants suitable for diverse urban environments throughout South Australia.

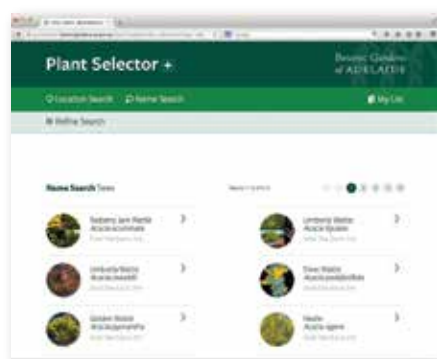
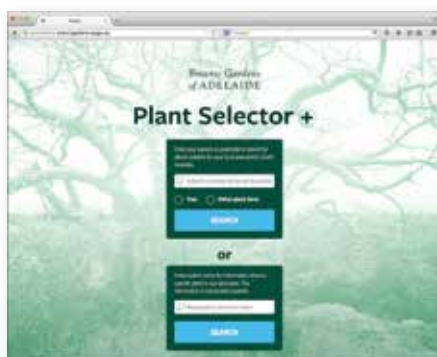
By entering your suburb, and refining your search using options that suit your needs, the database will produce plants that will thrive in your conditions.

For example, I live in Belair on top of a ridge and my topsoil is shallow over a shale and clay base.

For some time it has appeared that not many plants like to grow there. Luckily I love the native Grey box trees, of which I have many!

However, when I use the *Plant Selector +* to search for groundcovers, shrubs and other trees that will grow on my block, I find many beautiful native and exotic plants that will in fact do well.

These plants have been well-researched by



our team of horticulturalists and are based on two main criteria; the soil type and landscape type of the planting location.

I can refine my search further to include many of my preferences or requirements such as shape, flower or seasonal colour, water needs and tolerances.

With trees I have additional options including the type of garden or other

environment, and the main purpose of the planting, whether it be for food, shade, protection or fauna habitat.

With such a wide choice of suitable plants, there is no reason why I shouldn't be able to make a perfectly wonderful native, exotic or blended garden.

As with many databases I can add plants to my personal list of favourites, print it out and take the list to my local nursery where I can ask for additional advice.

Our team has worked on developing this online resource for a couple of years now.

We are continually refining it and we take great pride in recommending it to you!

You can find it on the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide website.

Good luck, have fun, and please contact us using the Feedback button if you have any problems.

*Plant Selector +* has been developed with the assistance of the Local Government Research & Development Scheme and SA Water.

Green Infrastructure project partners include Botanic Gardens of Adelaide, Renewal SA, Natural Resources Adelaide & Mt Lofty Ranges, Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure. ■

*Sheryn Pitman runs the Green Infrastructure project at the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide.*

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Hey kids!

## Become a City Corn Crop farmer

**T**his spring the Botanic Gardens of South Australia is looking for children to become City Corn Crop farmers and help plant Adelaide's City Crop.

For the first time the Botanic Gardens of South Australia will be on the Yellow Brick Road at the Royal Adelaide Show. Between 5 and 14 September Yellow Brick Road participants can visit our stall to learn about corn, collect a growing kit to take home and register to become an inaugural City Corn Crop farmer.

City Corn Crop farmers will be invited to the Adelaide Botanic Garden on Sunday, 26 October to help get more than 1,400 corn seeds in the ground.

Open pollinated, heirloom sweet corn variety, True Gold, has been supplied by The Diggers Club and will be grown in the garden.

Children and families who participate will enjoy a day full of fun and educational activities, and experience a little bit of the country in Adelaide's CBD.

City Corn Crop farmers will be kept up to date on the progress of their crop and are welcome to visit throughout the growing season.

In early February, when the corn is ready to eat, all will be invited back to help harvest the crop and enjoy delicious, fresh, heirloom corn straight from the garden.

The City Corn Crop will educate children about where food comes from and demonstrate how to grow delicious, fresh produce at home. For urban families it provides a unique insight into the agriculture industry and an opportunity to collaborate with the local community.

For more information and updates about this exciting project please visit the Botanic Gardens of South Australia website and subscribe to the e-Newsletter or go to Facebook or Twitter. ■

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# Water from storage to tap: making it happen

**W**e all need water and to make sure the state's needs are met, SA Water operates and maintains a network of more than 26,000km of water mains. These pipes deliver water to residents and businesses across the state, regardless of terrain, climate or demand.

When it comes to laying pipes, water does not always take the path of least resistance.

It means when determining the preferred path for new pipeline routes, there are a number of engineering and social issues that need to be considered.

From an engineering point of view, elevation and terrain play a major role.

A straight path is rarely the best option, particularly in rural areas. In addition to existing properties, structures and other utility infrastructure, consideration needs to be given to natural obstructions such as hills and water courses.

Gravity is always the most efficient way of moving water through pipes – the less



pumping required, the more cost efficient the process becomes.

So if there is a natural way to move water through the pipeline, it is generally looked to as the first option.

Minimising the disruption to residents is also given significant consideration.

Wherever possible, pipes will be laid along streets and easements. Works are also scheduled with customers in mind, ensuring that residents are given advance notice, works are conducted during

reasonable hours and traffic management is provided where required.

SA Water has also set high environmental standards and makes great efforts to avoid and minimise their impact on the environment and places with cultural and heritage importance.

Potential impacts to native vegetation and significant trees are avoided, and advice from specialists and local councils is incorporated into the design of the pipeline.

All these considerations aim to direct each project towards an outcome that is cost efficient, environmentally sustainable and customer focused – despite all the obstacles, both literal and metaphorical, that lie in its path.

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Polygala Little Charmer

## Big performance from a real Little Charmer

**W**hen it comes to all round garden performance, polygalas are often underrated, particularly the smaller forms such as Little Charmer.

The traditional polygala is often referred to as a 'grow anywhere' bush. This is largely because of its tolerance to drought and adaptability to a wide range of soil conditions. It also has an ability to flower through the summer months.

The latest forms of polygala retain all of this hardiness but on smaller, more compact bushes.

Little Charmer grows to around 1.5m and is more dwarf and bushy than other varieties.

It has a long flowering period extending from mid winter throughout spring. The flowers are dark cerise and stand out against purplish green foliage.

Although polygalas are sun lovers, they tolerate light shade well and respond to a small amount of fertiliser in spring.

Despite their drought tolerance, they respond to good soaking during very hot weather.

The plants thrive in coastal conditions but have low tolerance to frost. ■



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Volunteers at work revegetating the Stipiturus Conservation Park near Mt Compass.

# Fleurieu swamp revival is good news for rare plants and animals

**S**outh Australia is home to some very special natural places. And while some are largely untouched, others are slowly being restored and protected through careful revegetation and conservation, often with the help of volunteers who love the bush or simply want to make a contribution to the community and the environment.

One of these is Stipiturus Conservation Park near Mt Compass on the Fleurieu Peninsula, about 50 kilometres south of Adelaide.

Before it was proclaimed as a park in 2006, Stipiturus was used for sheep and cattle grazing. But what makes this land special is that it is home to the largest remaining peat swamp on the Fleurieu Peninsula, a nationally endangered ecosystem.

Most native plants in and around the swamp have regional or state conservation ratings. And it is home to one of the remaining swamp-based populations of the nationally endangered Mt Lofty Ranges Southern Emu-wren (*Stipiturus malachurus intermedius*), after which the park was named.

The park also contains one of the largest remaining populations of the endangered Mt Compass Oak-bush (*Allocasuarina robusta*).

And helping to make sure this rare shrub thrives in the park is what brought out more than 70 enthusiastic volunteers, who recently planted 3500 seedlings as part of



The Emu-Wren, one of the species to benefit from the project.

Swampfest, the annual one-day planting event in the park.

Joe Quarmby, an ecologist with Natural Resources Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges, says the main objective of the project has been to create a large, viable population of the endangered Mount Compass Oak-bush and restore the threatened ecosystem in which it grows.

While the surrounding farm land is green and productive, the park itself is a special sanctuary, being one of the only areas of suitable habitat for the Oak-bush to be planted in a protected conservation reserve.

Opportunities to restore these rare Fleurieu swamp ecosystems are few and far between.

But they are essential for the long-term

survival of the many species of plants and animals, such as Mt Lofty Ranges Southern Emu-wren that call the swamps home.

The work to revegetate Stipiturus Conservation Park is a collaboration between the Goolwa to Wellington Local Action Planning group and Natural Resources Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges with the involvement of the Conservation Council of SA.

The revegetation at Stipiturus has been planned carefully so that it reintroduces specific combinations of local shrubs, sedges and groundcovers in an attempt to replicate the type of habitat that occurred naturally in the area before settlement.

Plantings to date have substantially increased the population of the Mt Compass Oak Bush and other endangered plants such as the Swamp Daisy Bush (*Olearia glandulosa*).

Planting events such as Swampfest are just one of many opportunities for anyone interested in the environment and South Australia's natural places to get involved.

If you'd like to find out about other volunteering opportunities, contact Natural Resources Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges on 8273 9100. ■

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# Not so big bougainvilleas

**B**ougainvilleas are ideal plants for growing in a hot sunny position. If you find traditional bougainvilleas too big and dwarf bougainvilleas too small, you're likely to find Red Dragon bougainvilleas just right.

All of the attributes of a bougainvillea are there – brilliant colours, long lasting flowering bracts, strong growth (without excess vigour) on plants that grow 1-2 metres tall.

Most varieties can be trained as a small climber or light screening plant, either growing in a container, raised bed or garden.

They look great when mass planted in a sunny part of the garden or alternatively, pruned to grow as a small feature shrub.

Again, because of their size, Red Dragons can be grown on the sunny side of an outdoor living room or positioned on a sunny patio or balcony.

Plants in containers should be grown in a quality potting mix containing an organic slow release fertiliser.

Red Dragon bougainvilleas will begin flowering in spring and if trimmed lightly early in summer, they will continue flowering through autumn and often well into winter.

Recommended varieties for SA include:

- ▶ Red Zed - bold, rich red. Magenta bracts, dark green foliage on a compact upright bush.
- ▶ Pretty Purple - long flowering intense deep purple bracts. Medium size with compact growth. Cascading habit.
- ▶ Plum Crazy - masses of deep plum coloured bracts. Upright compact growth. ■

Bougainvillea Pretty Purple



Bougainvillea Red Zed



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Good gardening

## Creepers provide a colourful cover up

**C**reepers are making a comeback, particularly in gardens where colourful plants are needed to cover the walls of a courtyard or provide natural shade over a backyard pergola.

### Wisteria

Wisteria looks spectacular, but only if it has room for its long flowering racemes to hang suspended in a position where they can be admired.

Chinese wisteria (*W. sinensis*) is more reliable when it comes to flowering although its 20cm racemes are not usually as long as the Japanese wisteria (*W. floribunda*). In many cases these have 30-40cm long racemes and some, such as *W. f. 'Macrobotrys'*, can reach 50cm.

As a general rule, Chinese wisteria is best displayed against the wall of a house or a shed, whereas the larger racemes of the Japanese types look best when they can hang from a pergola unimpeded by other branches.

Once flowering is over both types produce strong thin lateral growth. This is best shortened to three sets of leaves during early summer. Any major reshaping is also best carried out straight after flowering.

### Pandoreas

It's taken time to happen but the ornamental value of the Australian native pandorea is starting to be appreciated.

Because they are native most varieties have excellent tolerance to dry conditions and grow in most soil types that are well drained.

There are two main types. *P. jasminoides*, often called bower vine (previously known as either bignonia or tecoma) is probably most suited to smaller gardens although once established it will cover up to five metres.

Clusters of pink, white or yellow trumpet-like blooms that can be up to 50mm across are produced from spring through to late autumn while the foliage is usually glossy and dark green.

A cultivar of *P. j. alba* sold as 'Lady Di' has pure white petals with a soft yellow centre. It is not quite as vigorous as the other cultivars (2m), making it useful for smaller areas and also hanging baskets.

*P. pandorana* (formerly *P. australis* and *Tecoma australis*) is far more vigorous, particularly once established and will quickly cover six metres. The trumpet shaped flowers are quite small (30mm) but produced in huge clusters creating a stunning effect in the garden during early spring.

Some varieties have interesting colourations inside the petals although *P. p. alba* is a pure creamy white.



Wisteria

### Chinese star jasmine

For adaptability in the garden, the Chinese star jasmine, *Trachelospermum jasminoides*, is a real winner.

The plants will cover three metres when spaced three metres apart and given trellis wire to hold on to, they will quickly form a wonderful wall of glossy dark green foliage.

The leaves mat closely together providing total cover similar to the effects of an ivy but without the rampant growth.

During early summer your wall of green will be literally smothered with small white star-like flowers emitting soft jasmine perfume.

The plants look good trained against a wall, covering an archway or arbor, or maybe left even as a ground cover plant. It also happens to be a plant that doesn't mind whether it's growing in full sun or full shade and adapts to most garden soils.



# Dig wide not deep

**W**hen it comes to planting trees it's the width of the hole you dig, not its depth that really makes a difference.

If you think about it the roots of most trees spread on average one and a half times the plant's height, whereas the roots rarely extend more than a metre below the surface, with most of the root system concentrated in the top 40cm.

Yet for some strange reason the planting hole most home gardeners dig rarely extends beyond the width of the plant's container.

Within each container is a potting mix designed for rapid root growth. In most cases it comprises small pieces of composted pine bark. However, the pieces are chunky enough to allow air and water and in particular plant roots, to move freely through the mix.

The average garden soil across most of South Australia is a hard setting clay loam, where the individual particles are extremely small and often jammed so close together that there is little room for air, water and in particular plant roots, to move.

Even in gardens where the soil is sandy, the area below the top 15 to 20cm is often compacted to a stage where air and plant movement is restricted.

Problems often arise when the hole you prepare for your plant is only a little larger than the tree root ball.

In fact you can imagine the plant's anguish as it tries to push its roots out of the open potting mix and into the compacted poorly aerated surrounding soil.

In the case of citrus, camellias and other plants with a relatively weak fibrous root system, the plants simply sit there and sulk.

Dig the plants up two or three years later



and the roots are still huddled together within the confines of the planting hole.

The answer to this dilemma is quite simple. Loosen the soil for at least half a metre all around the planting hole and at least 15cm deeper than the depth of the tree's container.

This allows new roots to break out of the existing root ball and start searching immediately for both nutrients and moisture.

The benefits of such action are very apparent during the growing season.

Trees planted during winter will burst into new bud growth very early in spring and this will be followed by strong vigorous branch growth. ■

## Reminders

### Water check

Don't get caught out by a sudden burst of hot weather. Check hoses, hose fittings and sprinklers. Micro-irrigation systems should be flushed with water by removing the end stoppers from each irrigation line and letting the water flow at high pressure for five minutes.

Micro-irrigation systems are very easy to install. They are inexpensive and they certainly take the hard work out of watering hanging baskets and container plants on the patio or courtyard.



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# Micro irrigation systems put your water where it's needed



Rather than turning the water off during summer and risking a visual disaster, consider using it more efficiently, says **JON LAMB**.

**T**he quickest way to achieve efficient watering in the home garden is to install a micro irrigation system.

Micro irrigation means applying small quantities of water at a time through low cost drippers or micro jets. The water is applied largely to the plant's root zone and not to the spaces in between.

Drippers are also effective in reducing evaporation losses as the water droplets soak readily into the soil, leaving very little close to the surface where evaporation losses from conventional sprinklers can be very high.

Sprinklers that spray fine jets of water high into the air and those that produce a very fine mist should be phased out of your watering system as losses through evaporation on a hot windy day can exceed 50 percent.

Micro irrigation systems are very easy to install.

Water is delivered from the tap to your garden beds through low cost 13mm poly pipe (\$5 to \$6 for 20 metres), while a thin 4mm tubing (\$5 for 10 metres) joined by small 4mm adaptors (15 cents) take the water from the main hose to the emitters, i.e. drippers or micro jets.

Emitters vary in price according to their role. As a guide, plants of similar size with similar water requirements can be watered with standard 4 litre per hour drippers.

If the plant size or its watering requirements vary, select one of the emitters that can be adjusted to vary the amount of water being delivered.

Shrubblers are particularly useful as they trickle water through eight small holes instead of one.

The rate of flow can be changed to cover from a square centimetre to 20 to



Shrubblers (left) are ideal for surface rooted plants. Drippers are more suited to trees and shrubs.



30 square centimetres. These are ideal for watering plants in containers and brilliant in hanging baskets.

Shrubblers are also available that deliver a set amount of water i.e. 25 litres per hour. These are ideal when you want to water plants of similar size but the space between plants varies.

Look for shrubbler models where the emitters can be purchased attached to a small plastic stake.

It makes installation much easier and it has the necessary 4mm adaptors attached, ready to go.

Most suppliers of micro irrigation equipment provide an advisory service usually at no cost, if you buy your equipment from them.

Don't be tempted to put too many outlets or emitters on the one irrigation line.

For example, 10 shrubblers will use most of the water that can pass through a 13mm hose.

Increase the hose size to 19mm and the number can be increased to 25. If you are installing drippers, it is worth knowing the flow rate through a 13mm hose is nine

litres a minute or 540 litres per hour.

Trying to water trees or shrubs as well as annuals or surface rooted plants through the same micro irrigation system is not recommended as trees and shrubs require deep watering, while annuals and surface rooted plants need most of their water applied to the top 15-20cm.

As a guide, use drippers on the trees and shrubs and shrubblers on the surface rooted plants, even if it means running two irrigation systems through the same area.

The drippers should be installed on either side of the tree or shrub to ensure at least 60 percent of the root zone is covered.

Retailers of micro irrigation now have a range of information available to help do-it-yourself installers.

They also provide some excellent guides to watering gardens through micro irrigation systems. ■

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# Great lawns with less water

**L**awns continue to play a major role in the average suburban landscape, particularly in households where children and pets need somewhere to play and an area to call their own.

In reality, there is no reason why you can't have an attractive stand of grass that does not consume vast quantities of water.

It's simply a matter of retraining the grasses and spring, as the top soil starts to dry out, is the right time to start.

The aim is to water the lawn less often – but, when you do water – water longer.

The grass won't grow so quickly and eventually there will be less grass to mow.

Meanwhile, the plant's roots will be forced to grow deeper, extending into areas of moisture normally beyond their reach.

With careful training, it's possible to reduce the amount of water you apply to the lawn by 50 percent.

Whatever the normal frequency of watering, extend it first by two days, then three, four and more.

Aim at doubling the normal time between watering.

This may stress the grasses a little during

hot weather, but they will survive. On the other hand, for most of summer they will thrive.

There are many couch and kikuyu lawns growing on heavy clay loam (this is typical of the Adelaide Plains) that are only watered once in three weeks from December through to March.

Admittedly they don't produce much growth, but they still look good – besides there is little point in growing grass that has to be constantly cut.

While extending the period between watering, it is also worthwhile considering increasing the amount of water you apply.

The aim should be to soak the top soil to a depth of 12-15cm.

In some gardens, applying additional water will cause the moisture to run over the surface rather than soak into the ground.

This problem is usually overcome through the application of a granular form of soil wetting agent or changing your sprinklers to a low throw, lower pressure system that delivers the required amount of water over a longer period. ■

## Reminders

### Pruning

As spring flowering shrubs lose their bloom, they should be pruned lightly to encourage new growth for next year's flowers. The list includes prunus, flowering almonds, cherries and other stone fruits, as well as winter flowering natives.

### Lawns

Many lawns have been allowed to grow rank in the past few weeks. Hard cutting will damage new crown growth. Lift the mower blades before mowing, gradually reducing their height over the next few cuts.

### Snails

Check the garden regularly over the next few weeks as snails will be emerging from hibernation and they will be very hungry. Try trapping them under boards raised a few centimetres from the ground. Snail baits are effective but make sure your dogs and cats are not at risk.

### Cyclamen plants

Cyclamens that have finished flowering are well worth saving. After the blooms have died down, the plant should be placed outside in a shady position. Gradually reduce watering until the leaves have also died down. Place the pot in a sheltered, shady place until you are ready to re-pot the corm early in the new year.

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# Herbs in combo packs

**C**ombo herbs are sold like vegetable seedlings. There are usually six different herbs in a pack. For less than \$5 it's an excellent way of starting a herb collection.

Most garden centres also feature a herb bar containing a dozen or more plants each in small ready-to-go containers.

While the plants can be kept in their small containers for a week or so it is usually a good idea to pot them on into larger size containers or, if there is space, plant them straight into a raised garden bed.

Apart from combo herbs many garden centres now carry combo lettuce – six cell punnets with at least four different lettuce varieties.

These grow into a dome shape and can be harvested over a six to 10 week period by continually picking the outer leaves.

Varieties include Cos (upright leaves) and a number of Butterhead (soft leaf) types. Six plants will fit into a 1.5m planter box or a 60cm diameter container.

For the adventurous there is also an Asian vegetable combo featuring six different quick growing leaf vegetables suitable for cooking in a wok. ■



*You will find a full list of vegetables to plant this spring on page 32.*

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# Taking the guesswork out of watering the garden



New technology can significantly reduce water use in the home garden, says independent irrigation consultant, **RICHARD WILSON**.

Installing an automatic weather sensor that continually works out when the garden needs watering and for how long is the easiest way I know of taking the guesswork out of when to water the garden.

The sensor known as a Solar Sync can reduce your water use in the garden by 30 percent.

This results in a very significant savings in the water bill for a well maintained garden.

The sensor is in fact a small but very advanced weather station that identifies the amount of moisture plants in the garden are using.

To achieve this, the weather sensor measures both sunlight and temperature in your garden on a daily basis.

The amount of water garden plants need varies significantly from day to day, week to week and from one season to the next.

Most gardeners set the controller on their irrigation system in spring and leave it on this setting for the rest of the season.

The Solar Sync on the other hand adjusts the run times on the irrigation controller according to the daily weather and the plant's needs.

This means during cool weather, water is not wasted as the irrigation time is reduced.

However, when conditions are very hot, the plants will receive the right amount of



Irrigation run times are adjusted according to the daily weather. The Solar Sync is in fact a very advanced weather station.

moisture for their needs.

The sensor also has a shut off device that prevents irrigation during rain and then reprograms the next irrigation based on local weather conditions.

These kind of adjustments result in a very significant reduction in the amount of water used. In many gardens, the sensor pays for itself in the first season.

Feedback from gardeners who rely on tank water is also very positive as it allows them to stretch their valuable supplies to meet the plant's changing needs over the season without wasting water.

The key to achieving maximum savings

is to make sure the sensor is installed correctly. It needs to be located in the open and in the hottest part of the garden.

It is also important to ensure that the irrigation stations are programmed correctly to represent the type of plants in the garden and the environment that surrounds them. ■

*Richard Wilson is an independent irrigation installer and consultant and runs Adelaide Pumps & Gardens. Contact 0409 094 847.*

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# New iris varieties offer two great displays every year

**I**s it any wonder gardeners across the state continue to grow irises? The colour they produce each spring is magnificent, yet the plants seem to thrive on neglect.

However, growers of the traditional bearded iris with its medium-sized dark blue blooms may need to consider a garden makeover.

New varieties are moving into the market with an ability to flower twice a year, with the main display appearing through November and December followed by a smaller but most welcome repeat performance in early autumn.

At the same time, the colour range and variation of hues within individual blooms is growing while the size of the now fluted or ruffled blooms has doubled.

The secret of producing a great display is to grow three or four plants of the one variety in a group. If space permits, vary your selection across early, medium and late blooming varieties to create an extended flowering period.

Regardless of their flower power, irises are very easy to grow. They will certainly survive considerable neglect but flower best when attention is given to meeting two basic needs – plenty of sun and free draining soil.

Irises grow from thick, fleshy rhizomes



and the mechanism that triggers them into flowering is direct sunlight beating down on the top of the rhizome during summer.

It means when planting, the top of the rhizome must not be covered with soil and in particular, mulch.

In heavy clay soils it won't hurt to have the top centimetre or so of the rhizome exposed, whereas in sand, the rhizome should be level with the ground, although in full sun, a centimetre of sand over the rhizome won't hurt as the sand readily transmits heat.

Lack of direct sunlight is one of the main reasons why irises don't flower or produce a poor display.

Just as important is drainage. Across the Adelaide Plains, through the Hills and beyond, much of the soil is poor draining clay.

Don't despair, the plants will still thrive if you rearrange the soil to produce mounds or beds raised 8-12cms higher than the surrounding soil.

While irises can be planted or moved at any time of the year, the best time is just before they begin to produce new roots in autumn or immediately after flowering.

This gives the plants plenty of time to produce strong roots and gather energy for flowering.

Container grown bearded irises in flower are not readily available from general garden centres.

However, there are a number of specialist iris nurseries in SA and a visit now while the plants are in bloom will help with your selection. Most also have excellent catalogues.

Apart from colour and size, look for the code E – early, M – mid season, L – late and RE which means repeat performing. You may also notice a few are coded F, denoting fragrance, as breeders are working hard to introduce this wonderful characteristic. ■

## Well timed feeding delivers results

**F**eeding irises should also be timed to coincide with their main growth periods.

In spring, use a complete fertiliser that has a high potash content.

Extra potash will help improve the quality of the blooms.

In autumn, a slow release organic fertiliser such as blood and bone is ideal.

A new organic pelletised rose fertiliser is very useful for flowering plants such

as irises, largely because extra potash has been added. Irises are also good waterwise plants. In fact, many a display has been ruined through over-watering (and also over fertilising).

Too much water (or fertiliser) will produce leaves and few flowers.

Just before, during and immediately after flowering, a weekly watering may be needed, but only if the ground is starting to dry out.

During summer, the aim is to keep the plants just ticking over by soaking the topsoil every week or so.

Pop up sprinklers that water every two or three days and sprinkler systems that constantly wet the foliage and the top of the rhizome will invariably result in the rhizomes turning into a soggy mess. ■

*For more information, visit the Iris Show on October 25 & 26 (see What's On – page 63)*



# Better ways to beat spring bugs



**MARK CALDICOTT** believes your local garden centre is a great place to start the search for organic gardening advice.

**W**elcome to the world of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for that's how professional growers and horticulturalists manage damaging insects.

With IPM, you observe what the insects are doing in your garden and whether they are doing harm or good. Then, work out why they are in your garden in the first place.

Once you have identified what the insect is and what it is doing you can then put a plan of action in place – but only if required.

Let's look at aphids as an example of an insect that appears in most gardens in spring.

Why is it here? Fresh young tender growth with fresh sap flow offers perfect feed for a hungry aphid. What is it doing? Piercing the new growth and sucking the sap from the new shoots.

This can become a problem if the aphid population is large as they can dehydrate the plant's growing tips and potentially spread plant viruses between plants.

Aphids also excrete a honeydew that can create perfect conditions for sooty mould, a fungus that can coat plant leaves with a layer of black mould. This makes it harder for the leaves to photosynthesise and can slowly weaken the plant. Honeydew is also attractive to ants which will feed on the sticky material whilst protecting the aphids from predator insects.

Your first step in controlling the aphids in the home garden should simply be to hose them off with a jet of water, or brush them off.

## Predators on the move

However, not only did the aphids wake up for spring, so did their predators. These include lady beetles, hoverflies, lacewings, spiders and a very effective predatory wasp, just to name a few.

When aphid populations begin to rise, predators also move in and given a little time, will bring the aphid populations down to a level where they are not damaging your garden.

Part of your IPM strategy is to encourage predators by not using chemicals in the garden that are toxic to insects.

Cultivating plants that attract many of these beneficial insects is also important. Plants like alyssum, coriander, fennel, parsley and daisies are just some of the plants that have the added benefit of attracting beneficial insects.



Ladybird beetles are your friends.

So while the aphid is a pest insect, it is also a valuable food source for many of the good guys and is an important part of your garden's ecosystem.

If you need to use a chemical solution then consider the least toxic option, one that will have the least collateral damage to beneficial insects in your garden. ■

*Mark Caldicott is garden manager for Norwood Garden Centre.*

*Editor's note: Spraying heavy aphid populations with eco oil or pest oil provides effective pest control but is a soft option for predators.*

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# Rare fruits are worth a look

In SA, bananas, guavas and feijoas can rival apples, apricots and plums in performance. However, other lesser known sub-tropicals, particularly white sapote and jaboticaba should also be a common backyard sight.

## Bananas

Bananas will grow and fruit quite well in South Australia providing they are protected from frost and very strong wind. Young containerised plants are often available from specialist nurseries.

Before planting out, improve the soil with compost or a 30 litre bag of composted soil improver. This will help hold moisture close to the surface where the plants have most of their feeding roots.

Plants established now will develop a strong 2m high stem by the end of the season.

Next spring, it should send up a strong sucker and by autumn, if it is mature enough, it should flower and set fruit that should ripen in the following spring.

Once the fruit has been harvested, remove the original stem to encourage a further single sucker.

Additional suckers from the same plant are best removed at ground level once they have reached 30cm in height. These can be transplanted to begin a new clump.

Bananas, like citrus, need regular feeding. Use blood and bone when planting and follow this up with a complete fertiliser in spring and maybe chicken manure pellets in early summer.

Varieties suited to South Australia include:

- ▶ Silk – strong grower, small fruit with rich flavour, soft thin skin
- ▶ Lady finger – drought hardy, long shelf life, dessert type, sweet creamy flesh
- ▶ Gold finger – tangy tasting, doesn't turn brown when cut.

## Guavas and feijoas

These both produce small attractive evergreen trees. Guavas are relatively small (2-3m) and are useful for small gardens or large containers.

They produce interesting branches with



Guava

smooth bark while the leaves early in the season are tinged red, turning dark green as the season progresses.

There are two types, strawberry and pineapple, and both have fairly small fruit the size of a large cherry plum.

The Hawaiian guava fruit is slightly larger as is the tree a little taller. The fruits mature in autumn and are quite delicious with strong flavour and a very strong aroma.

Feijoa grows into a small (3-5m) tree that can be shaped as a compact lawn specimen, grown as a background shrub or hedged. The fruits are plum size and like the guavas, come with strong taste and aroma. Guavas and feijoas are very easy to grow, tolerating a wide range of soils. Both have some tolerance to frost.

Regular watering during summer will ensure reasonable fruit size. Feed with a balanced fertiliser in spring and don't be afraid to trim or prune early in the growing season. This will ensure the plants maintain their attractive compact shape.

## White sapote

White sapote (casimiroa) is sometimes called the ice-cream tree. The potential of the White sapote in South Australia is only just being realised.

The trees are evergreen, quite hardy and grow in a range of soils.

The fruits are the size of a peach with soft skin and very smooth white custard-like flesh. The seeds inside are quite large.

In South Australia, the tree can grow 6-7m in height but it responds well to pruning and can be shaped to size.

Grafted trees should begin bearing within two years of being planted. The best varieties include Vista, Ortego and Pike.

White sapote is best planted in late spring when the ground is warm – but before we run into really hot weather.

Growth should be quite vigorous as the tree has an extensive root system.

You will need to water regularly during summer and spread poultry manure under the canopy during spring before mulching.

## Jaboticaba

The jaboticaba is also worth discovering. It produces a slow growing bushy tree, 2-4m in height, and up to 3m across.

The fruits are grape-like with shiny black fruit when ripe.

While the skin is quite tough, the flesh is very edible with a sweet vanilla flavour.

The fruit is produced in waves from along the trunk of the tree and along the main branches with two or three harvests in the one season.

The only downside is their slowness to mature.

They should begin fruiting four or five years after planting.

Being a slow growing plant, they adapt well to container growing and are ideal for small gardens.

Jaboticaba grow best in a warm sunny position protected from strong wind.

The trees will fruit best if they are mulched and watered regularly during summer.

Feed with a complete fertiliser each spring. ■



# Century old business impacts on Limestone Coast landscapes

**H**ow do you measure the value of a family business that has grown and sold plants and provided reliable gardening information to the Naracoorte community for 100 years?

The impact of Hutchison's Plant Nursery on the landscapes across the Limestone Coast must be considerable.

Hutchison's Plants Plus Nursery began as the Naracoorte Plant Farm in 1914 when Alexander Hutchison started selling plants and produce that he grew on the site of the existing garden centre on Stewart Tce, Naracoorte.

In the early 1920s Alexander's wife, Jessie began selling plants, floral arrangements, stationery and fancy goods in Naracoorte's

main street. Son Ian and his wife, Enid joined the business in the 1940s growing many of the plants they sold at the Stewart Tce site.

Subsequently, present owner, Andrew and his brother Rex became involved with Andrew focussing on growing plants and landscaping and Rex on the florist and retail business. During 1988, the brothers closed the florist business and opened a retail garden centre at the nursery site. Andrew and his wife Marilyn became owners in 1997 focussing on making the Stewart Tce site a modern garden centre.

According to Andrew, keeping a family business running successfully for 100 years has not been without its challenges. It has

certainly resulted in diversification.

"We were part of the former 'Get Growing' group of garden centres in South Australia and an inaugural member of Plants Plus when it began in SA.

"I believe joining Plants Plus was the turning point for our business. The benefits have been amazing giving us a strong corporate image while maintaining our independence.

"It has also allowed us to reorganise and modernise the centre and with a strong promotional emphasis, we have continued to grow."

Hutchison's was the 2010 winner of the Plants Plus store of the year award for SA, WA and runner-up in 2012. ■

**Hutchison's** celebrating **100** years in 2014 **Plants Plus**

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Correa Autumn Blaze



Grevillea Robyn Gordon

# Nectar of the Gods: plants for native wildlife



Attracting native wildlife to your garden is rewarding and fun as well as educational, says native landscape consultant **MARK THOMAS**.

**A**s I write, Eastern spinebills and New Holland honeyeaters are battling it out for air supremacy, feeding from various nectar plants in our garden and cautiously flying from shrub to shrub.

A large variety of native plants is available, producing suitable nectar for wildlife without the risk of spreading diseases that can be prevalent when using feeders.

The Proteaceae family (*Grevillea*, *Banksia*, *Hakea*, *Adenanthos* etc.) have many fantastic nectar producing species and cultivars that wildlife will relish.

*Grevillea* 'Ned Kelly' and G. 'Robyn Gordon' have beautiful big, pink flowers year round.

A wide range of nectar feeding birds and mammals such as ringtail and brush tail possums will delight in the flowers and new growth tips.

The plant needs good drainage and direct light but may suffer from chlorosis (yellowing of the foliage) in soil exceeding pH 8.5.

*Banksia marginata* and *B. praemorsa* have large yellow flowers as well as a wine red form of *B. praemorsa* also being available. Eastern spinebills, New Holland honeyeaters, wattlebills and other species of honeyeaters feed directly from the



*Banksia praemorsa*

flowers while clinging on to them.

Possums, pygmy possums and feathertail gliders will enjoy the nectar. These particular Banksias will grow in most soil types if given good drainage and plenty of sun.

*Callistemon* or bottlebrush is a genus that produces great nectar from copious flowers, attracting a large range of nectar feeding birds and mammals.

*Callistemon citrinus* 'Splendens' is a large shrub with lime green foliage, bronze-red new tips and bright red flowers for most of the year. It will grow in all soil types including waterlogged areas.

*Calothamnus*, netbush or one sided bottlebrush is a smaller genus of plants with the most commonly grown species being *Calothamnus quadrifidus*.

They have fine needle-like foliage and bright red or yellow flowers through spring, summer and autumn. The plant is tolerant of most soil types if given full sun and attractive to all the wildlife mentioned previously.

*Correas* such as *Correa pulchella* are South Australian endemics (grow naturally only here).

They have a wide range of forms from ground-cover to shrub and are attractive to nectar feeding birds, particularly the Eastern spinebills which regularly seek them out when in flower.

Flowering on various forms is from late summer through spring. Plants will do best in part shade or protection from afternoon sun and tolerate most well drained soils. ■

Mark Thomas runs Gondwana Landscapes & Consultancy, 0400 583 161  
[www.gondwanalc.com.au](http://www.gondwanalc.com.au)

# How to choose the right dripper, spray or sprinkler



Irrigation specialist, **ALAN WHITE** has some practical advice on how to use drippers, sprinklers or sprays in your garden.

**D**rippers, sprays and sprinklers vary considerably in the amount of water they apply and how it is distributed to the plant's root zone.

Before choosing a watering system, consider:

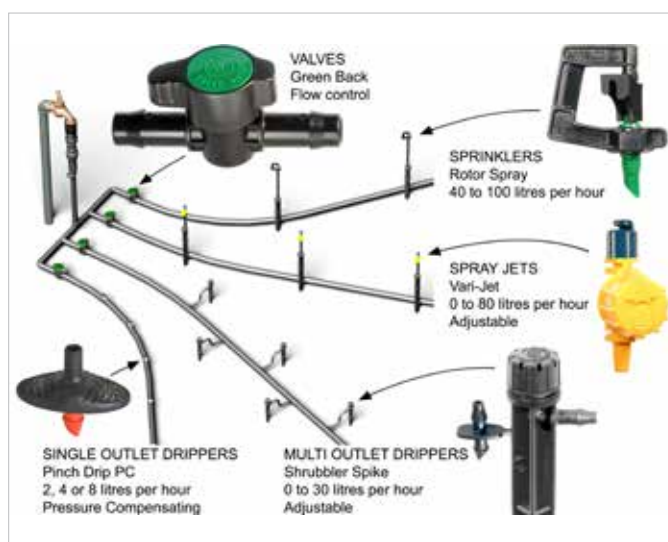
- ▶ Plant type - root pattern, canopy pattern, watering requirements (ask your local nursery expert).
- ▶ Micro climate - soil type, sun/shade, wind effects.
- ▶ Water supply - volume, location, restrictions.

It is important to group plants with similar watering requirements on the same irrigation line and to use similar emitters for each plant on that line.

For example, you could run one line of drippers to supply low water requirement plants such as natives and run a separate line of higher output shrubblers or sprays to supply roses and similar flowering plants with higher water needs.

## Mulch - worth knowing

Drippers and shrubbler type emitters - both operate perfectly under mulch. Sure the watering patterns might be disturbed but the water will still seep in and around



the plant root zone and that's all that matters. The trick is to locate the emitters near the plants.

Sprays and sprinklers - these must be installed above the mulch but you will need to apply enough water to saturate the mulch before it seeps through to the soil and the root zone.

## Hanging baskets

Microsprays vary in their shape and size but are ideal for most plants. Misters that create humidity as well as a light watering are great on shade loving plants like

fuchsias and ferns. Adjustable Vari Jets allow you to change the output of each emitter. This allows you to balance the water requirements for plants of different sizes.

Shrubblers are also perfect for hanging baskets as they provide a gentle inverted umbrella type water pattern that can be adjusted to meet the needs for each basket size or specific plant. Being exposed, hanging baskets may require repeat watering on hot or windy days.

## Trees

Larger trees have larger root areas and higher water requirements. As a rough guide, the root zone of a tree will extend out to the edge of the leaf canopy.

Providing even watering over the root zone can be achieved using under tree sprinklers.

A ring or two of drip lines with a number of drippers per ring can also meet the water requirements and may provide a more targeted approach in windy locations. ■

[www.antelco.com](http://www.antelco.com)



Dripper

2, 4 or 8 lph



Shrubbler

0 - 30 lph



Spray

0 - 80 lph



Mini Sprinkler

40 - 100 lph



# Designing the perfect landscape

## When dreams come true

**F**ulfilling wishes and dreams - that was the challenge for award winning landscape designer, Beryl Bredon when she was asked to revisit a large traditional 1900s sandstone villa at Malvern and extend the landscape she created 15 years ago.

The original landscape featured strong formal Italian style elements. However, much of the original land on the eastern side of the house had been sub-divided and sold. As a result, the house and garden was sadly out of proportion.

Two years ago, the owners were able to buy back the land and invite Beryl to turn their 15 year old dream into a reality.

The brief was to design and construct a garden that would build on the original landscape and complement the original architectural style of the house.

It also needed to meet the owners' lifestyle needs where entertaining, both indoors and outside, was important.

A large space was needed for children to play while in the garden, the original formality was to be extended but with additional colour and fragrance and plenty of room set aside for growing fruit trees, vegetables and herbs.

According to Beryl Bredon, these were the clients' wishes and dreams. However, the challenge for a landscape designer is



to use their skills and expertise and build these into a landscape that not only looks great, but is also very functional."

To complement the villa's strong architectural lines, a series of large formal garden rooms have been established using low evergreen hedging plants such as *Murraya paniculata* and *Buxus japonica*. These create strong linear elements throughout the landscape.

**Above:** A large entertaining area with adjacent lawn provides the basics for an outdoor living area.

**Left:** With the right choice of plants, it is possible to make a bold statement when creating a formal entrance.

With additional space available, a formal entrance to the house was established using camellias, *Buxus japonica* but in-filled with *Athropodium Parnell*.

"Apart from making a bold statement when you arrive, the plantings now lead you directly from the front gate to the front door," says Beryl.

To meet the clients' outdoor lifestyle needs, a large entertaining area has been created on the eastern side but close to the house amenities.

This area features very large sandstone pavers that blend with the house. These are complemented by very large formal sandstone urns and seats.

Adjacent to the entertainment area is a large reconstructed swimming pool and also an extensive area of lawn for children to play all sorts of games.

Along the eastern boundary, very tall growing *Juniperus Spartan* have been planted to create privacy from the eastern side neighbours. Along other boundaries, a tall but narrow form of ornamental pear (*Pyrus 'Capital'*) provides a great screen without taking up too much area.

Because it is deciduous it also allows the





sun to shine through during the winter months.

As the western side of the garden is in full sun, much of the area has been transformed to create a series of individual small gardens for fruit trees.

The orchard includes pomegranates, figs, olives, oranges, apricots, peaches and apples. Each fruit garden is surrounded by a low hedge but connected by areas of lawn.

Also on the western side are large raised garden beds that have been established for vegetables and herbs, along with beds of roses and lavender to provide many months of colour and fragrance. ■

*Beryl Bredon from Beryl Bredon Landscape Design was winner of the Landscape Association of SA (LASA) 2014 Awards of Excellence for residential design \$60,000-\$150,000. Contact 0411 694 215, beebredon@gmail.com*



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# Gleeville Under the Hills

## An open garden with history



A country style garden at Beaumont steeped in SA history has many features, says landscape designer **LYDIA PATON**.

**O**n the weekend of September 27th and 28th, the garden 'Gleeville Under the Hills' will be open for the first time as part of the Australia-wide Open Garden Scheme.

The large garden in Beaumont has an interesting history.

The original owner, Edward Gleeson, hosted the SA's first 'harvest home' way back in 1840. This was an early form of agricultural show and was fittingly held at Gleeville, where the colony's first grain crops had been harvested.

The heritage-listed barn, built in 1838, was initially constructed to house Gleeson's prized Arab stallion, Abdallah, but this September it will provide a sheltered spot for garden visitors to enjoy tea, coffee and home-baked goods.

In 1846, Samuel Davenport bought 'Gleeville Under the Hills' for £700. Subsequently, he sold the property to his brother-in-law, John Fullerton Cleland, in 1863.

Since then, five generations of Clelands have resided at the address (now 1 Dashwood Rd, Beaumont), including Sir John Cleland and his daughter, Joan Paton (my grandmother), who both had a keen interest in natural history and conservation in the state.

The garden is nearly two acres and has an eclectic mix of plants, with a large portion of the site dedicated to growing an extensive range of fruit trees and vegetables.

A grove of gnarled, old olive trees still exist from Davenport's era, while at the front of the garden a 30m tall Norfolk Island Pine tree planted in the mid-1800s towers over the house.

A large Lemon Scented Gum, planted to commemorate peace in 1945, is another prominent feature of the garden.

The eastern boundary is flanked by a grove of olive trees that provide a shelterbelt to the mixed orchard that includes citrus, stone fruit, figs and nut trees.

Tough figs, plums and pears have performed well in the recent hot summers, whereas the once majestic walnut trees have suffered due to limited water and the prevailing heat.

The glossy evergreen citrus continue to perform well with regular, moderate amounts of water, and at various times of the year there is an abundance of grapefruit, lemons and poorman's, navel and Valencia oranges.

In the summertime, the orchard is transformed by self-seeding hollyhocks in a kaleidoscope of soft yellows, apricots, pinks and deepest reds. These thrive in the clay soils and offer welcome cheer in the drier months.

Other parts of the garden have cottage-style beds of various ornamentals, some with traditional mixes of roses and bearded iris.



Over the past few years, many plants have been added to the garden to try and find a mix that will both provide year-round colour and tolerate Adelaide's hot, dry summers. These additions have included many Australian natives and, in more recent times, local indigenous plants.

Many years of experimentation have resulted in finding plants that like the heavy clay soil and tolerate extended dry conditions. There are many great examples of tough plants in the garden.

There will also be knowledgeable horticulturalists available over the weekend to assist with plant identification and recommendations.

Hundreds of plants have been propagated from the garden to provide a vast array of hard-to-source plants, which will be for sale over the weekend.

One of the very special features of this property is the sheer size of the garden.

'Gleeville Under the Hills' gives us a glimpse into the past and a way of life that has become increasingly rare.

Gleeville Under the Hills will be open for the first time as part of the Australian Open Garden Scheme on 27th and 28th September at 1 Dashwood Road, Beaumont. ■

*Lydia Paton is a consulting landscape designer and teaches garden design at the University of Adelaide.*





# Open Gardens for your diary

## September

6-7

**Tintagel.** 29 Jeffrey Street,  
Nairne  
**Avondale.** Avondale Road,  
near Rhynie

13-14

**The Looking Glass Garden.** 2  
Caralue Road, Marino

20-21

**Lykkebo.** 346 Ryan Road,  
Sellicks Hill  
**Burnlea.** 100 Burnlea Road, Bletchley  
Hamilton House 23 Commercial Road,  
Strathalbyn  
**Dalveen.** 173 Dalveen Road, Woodchester  
**Port Elliot Walk** (Sunday 21.)

27-28

**Gleeville under the Hills.** 1 Dashwood  
Road, Beaumont  
**Wirrapunga.** 7 Williams Road, Aldgate  
**Beaumont House.** 631 Glynburn Road,  
Beaumont (Sunday 28.)

## October

4-5

**Littleton Garden.** 20 Douglas Street,  
Magill  
**Rhagodia.** 25 Schaedel Street, Nuriootpa  
**Plant Fair at AlRu Farm** (Sunday 5 -  
Monday 6.)

11-12

**Serenity.** 16 Tweed Avenue, Marion  
**Tickletank.** 24 Hill Street, Mount Barker  
**Dunedin.** 16 Fairfield Drive, Strathalbyn  
**Fairlie.** 92 Dry Plains Road, Strathalbyn

18-19

**Hamlyn Cottage.** 394 Springs Road,  
Mount Barker Springs (\$10 entry)  
**Shanath.** 191 Hyde Road, North Shields,  
Port Lincoln

25-26

**Buccleuch.** 28 Burbank Way,



**OPEN  
GARDENS  
AUSTRALIA**

Mount Barker

**Casuarina.** 52 Sheoak Road, Mylor  
**Anlaby.** 829 Anlaby Road,  
Hamilton (\$10 entry)

## November

1-2

**Waldheim.** 49 Sheoak Road,  
Crafrers  
**Ashgrove Iris Garden.** 53-55  
Albert Street, Gumeracha  
**Karkoo.** 38 Foxhill Road, Mount  
George

**Glenaspen.** 48 Mount Road, Mount  
Crawford

**Aberfoyle.** 213 School Road, Kongorong  
**Tayoc Park.** 9 Stableford Court,  
Worrolong, Mount Gambier East  
**Apple Tree Cottage.** 119a Main South  
Road, Yankalilla (Sunday November 2)

3-5

**Special Event:** Sensational South East  
Tour

8-9

**Denella Downs.** 39 Summit Road,  
Meadows  
**Gate Cottage.** 66 Leslie Street Road,  
Mylor  
**Glynn Garden.** 18 Turnbull Drive,  
Worrolong, Mount Gambier East  
**Jennings Garden.** 16 Turnbull Drive,  
Worrolong, Mount Gambier East

13

**Special Event:** Decorating the Christmas  
Table

15-16

**Lochness Lodge.** 282 Ironbank Road,  
Ironbank  
**Ettrick.** 61 Muller Road, Mount George  
**Riversdale.** 78 Wick's Road, Balhannah  
(Sunday 16)

*More details on special events and open  
gardens, see the web site:  
[www.opengarden.org.au/regions/sa\\_calendar.html](http://www.opengarden.org.au/regions/sa_calendar.html)*



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# Dogs that dig in your garden



Digging holes is a very natural thing for dogs to do but there are other factors at play, as **NADINE CRAMPTON** explains.

**T**he biggest reason dogs dig is plain old boredom. With our busy lifestyles it's sometimes unavoidable that poor old Fido, the hairiest companion in the household, misses out on his daily walk.

When this happens dogs build up that excess energy and just like energetic children they look for ways to make mischief and seek out our attention.

Digging also becomes more prevalent during the summer months as dogs dig holes in the dirt to lie in throughout the day and night to keep them cool (pretty intelligent really!)

Some dogs have higher anxiety levels than other breeds and become anxious when their owners are out of sight.

Many will attempt to dig through to China just to find them. Calming collars are great for these particular guys.

Then we have the breeds that are born to dig.

For example, fox terriers are born hunters. They have been bred to chase and retrieve their prey and they are pretty good at it too.

Then we have the herding and sporty dogs like border collies, blue heelers, spaniels and retrievers just to name a few.

These guys are super intelligent and benefit from extra training to satisfy their active brain.



So now we know the main reasons that dogs dig. How do we stop it? Exercise!

This is your number one defence; an active mind needs to be stimulated so get your sneakers on and walk that pavement with all four paws.

Purchase endurance toys that mentally entertain and reward your dog, making sure you rotate them as dogs get bored just like we do.

Make sure they have a kennel that will provide security and shelter from the elements (you could even add a sand box next to it)

Training, just like exercise, is so

important. A well trained dog makes for a very happy household. But, if all the above is just not working, the On Guard Dig Stopper & Possum Guard will come to your rescue.

It is 2 meters long and all you have to do is bury it just below ground level. It has 1.8 mm little prickles so it's designed to cause discomfort not injury.

Dogs, cats and possums don't like harsh surfaces under their pads so this product quickly teaches them not to climb, dig or lie in a restricted part of your garden.

Place it near the fence line, in garden beds and in their favourite digging patches.

The On Guard dig stopper is UV stabilised and is available at your local nursery. It can be an inexpensive way to stop a frustrating problem.

We have five to give away to our readers so please email us with your digging story and you could be a lucky winner. ■

*For more information on this article, [Info@semaphorepetsandgarden.com.au](mailto:Info@semaphorepetsandgarden.com.au)*

*Nadine Crampton is a pet and garden lover and co-owner of Semaphore Pets and Gardens, combining the serenity of the garden with the love of pets.*

Jon Lamb's

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<b>Barossa Nursery</b>	Barossa Valley Way, Nuriootpa	8562 2288	•
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Protea World	Yundi & Victor Harbor Rd, Yundi	8556 0274	
<b>Semaphore Pets &amp; Garden</b>	119 Semaphore Rd, Semaphore	8341 5915	•
<b>Serenity Nursery</b>	201 Mannum Road, Murray Bridge	8532 1141	•
<b>State Flora Belair</b>	Belair National Park, Belair	8278 7777	•
The Conservatory	80 Unley Rd, Unley	8272 9657	
The Earth Works	Old Sturt Highway, Berri	8582 3775	
The Flower Garden (SA)	Shakes Rd, Nairne	8388 6126	
The Garden Depot	14 Secker Road, Mt Barker	8391 6262	
The Oasis Nursery & Giftware	31 Homburg Tce, Pinnaroo	8577 8646	
The Plant People SA	Main Rd, Gumeracha	8389 1393	
<b>Vadoulis Garden Centre</b>	554 Main North Rd, Gawler	8522 3400	•
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 Groundsplus, Hope Valley, 0410 346 311  
 Gullyscapes, Modbury Heights, 8263 2129, 0407 716 386  
 Henrietta Wighton Garden Design, Tasmore, 0438824815  
 Hills Classic Gardens, Stirling & Aldgate, 0408 744 288  
 Jeffries, Rosewater East, 8368 3555  
 Land Sculpture, Greenwith, 8380 5166, 0418 825 257  
 LCS Landscapes, Largs North, 8249 9799, 0418 807 101  
 Landscape Techniques, Lonsdale, 0402788133

Landscaping and Lighting, O'Halloran Hill, 8322 4757, 0417 803 752  
 Marks Waterwise Gardens, Greenock, 0402 039 794  
 Maxima, Welland, 7129 9031  
 Mr Bs Landscaping & Garden Care, Para Hills, 8281 1808, 0417 806 904  
 Munns Instant Lawn, Hove, 8298 0555  
 Neighbour Labour New Landscapes, Kent Town, 8362 0129, 0419 627 372  
 Newtons Building & Landscape Supplies, Newton, 8415 7706  
 Noble Landscapes, Clapham, 0438 347 446  
 OAMPS Ltd, Parkside 8172 8111  
 Outdoor Domain Designs, Seaclyff, 0408 900 195  
 Outside Ideas, Forestville, 8297 2330, 0416 049 930  
 Paul Jackson Gardens, Kent Town, 8265 4968, 0413 008 439  
 Peats Soils & Garden Supplies, Willunga, 8556 5295, 0419 310 441  
 Piccadilly Landscapes, Fullarton, 8364 3144, 0412 818 967  
 Plot Works, Woodside, 8389 9247  
 Prickly Pear Design, Linden Pk, 0414 478 344  
 Reece Irrigation, Adelaide, 8231 2888  
 Resource Co, Wingfield, 83473329  
 Riverland Creative Gardens, Loxton, 8584 4883, 0417 859 232  
 Somerset Landscaping, Edwardstown, 8297 7295, 0418 830 906  
 Summit Projects & Construction, Stirling, 8390 0148, 0411 709 302  
 TAFE Horticultural Centre, Netherby, 8372 6800  
 Tookoo Landscape Design, Greenock, 8562 8365, 0403 834 420  
 Top Cat Landscaping Services, Mawson Lakes, 8260 5569, 0412 445 732  
 Universal Magazines, North Ryde, (02) 9887 0310, 0411 424 335  
 Urban Sustainable Landscapes, Hilton Plaza, 0431 633 448  
 UrbanVirons Group, Regency Park, 8290 2000  
 Waterpro, Stepney, 8363 6050, 0407 546 660  
 Wax Design, Rose Park, 8463 0886, 0403 951 845  
 Wholesale Plants & Products, Dry Creek, 8262 7787, 0412 698 881  
 Wilson & Co Landscaping, Wingfield, 8359 1997, 0403 333 767  
 WJB Sustainable Landscapes, Roseworthy, 8524 8501, 0428 877 558  
 Yardstick Landscape Services, Prospect, 8342 5549, 0411 234 186  
 Your Plant Source, Munno Para Downs, 0414 749 917





# What's on

SA's gardening calendar :  
compiled from the 891ABC gardening noticeboard



891 ABC  
Adelaide

## SEPTEMBER

**5-14** 2014 Royal Adelaide Show, Adelaide Showground, Goodwood Rd, Wayville. Visit the Royal Adelaide Show website for more details.

**14** Herb Society of SA Spring Propagating Day (2pm-4pm), Findon Community Centre, 222 Findon Rd, Findon.

**20** Free Sustainability workshops, Wynn Vale Community Garden, 32 Park Lake Drive, Wynn Vale (behind kindergarten) (10am-1pm).

**20** Port Augusta Garden Club Show, Elizabeth Terrace, Port Augusta (10am-3pm).

**20-21** Native Orchid Society of SA Annual Spring Show, St Bernadette's Church Hall, South Road, St Marys (corner South Rd and Walsh Ave) (10am-4pm both days).

**21-27** Gawler Districts Orchid Club Spring Show, Hollywood Plaza, Winzor St and Spains Rd, Salisbury Downs. During normal trading hours.

**27** The Begonia Spring Show, Klemzig Community Hall, Main North East Rd (between OG Rd and Wellington St) (10am-4pm).

## OCTOBER

**11** 891ABC Adelaide Gardeners' Market. ABC Car Park at 85 North East Rd, Collinswood (8am-1pm).

**11-12** Australian Plants Society Spring Flower Show and Plant Sale, Stirling Angus Hall, Wayville Showgrounds (Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 10am-4pm).

**12** Australian Rhododendron Society Annual Plant Sale, Mt Lofty Botanic Garden in lower carpark (off Lampert Rd) (10am-4pm).

**17-26** Renmark's 20th Rose Festival. More than 30 open gardens to view at Renmark, Loxton and Waikerie.

**18-19** SA Geranium & Pelargonium Society Spring Show, Payneham Library Complex, Felixstow Cnr OG Rd & Turner St (10am-4pm).

**18-19** Rose Society of SA Spring Show, Burnside Community Centre, 401 Greenhill Rd, Tusmore (Sat 12noon-5pm, Sun 10am-4.00pm).

**25-26** The Bromeliad Society of South Australia's Spring Show and Sales, Maltese Cultural Centre, Beverley (Sat 9am-3pm, Sun 10am-3pm).

**25-26** The African Violet Society Burnside Community Centre, 50th Golden Anniversary Annual Show, 401 Greenhill Rd, Tusmore (Sat 1-5pm, Sun 10am-4pm).

**25-26** SA Iris Show, Goodwood Community Centre, Florence St, Goodwood (Sat 11am-5pm, Sun 10am-4pm).

**26** Salvia Spring Plant Sale, Fullarton Park Community Centre, cnr Fisher St and Fullarton Rd, Fullarton (8.30am-12noon).

## NOVEMBER

**2** Herb Day Sunday, Herb Society of SA, Fullarton Park Community Centre, cnr Fisher St and Fullarton Rd, Fullarton (10am-4pm).

### Waite Arboretum regular walking tours

Free guided walks of the Waite Arboretum are held on the first Sunday of every month from 11 am - 12.30 pm. Meet in front of Urrbrae House, Waite Campus (enter via Fullarton Rd)

### Botanic Gardens guided walks (walks last 1.5 hours)

**Adelaide Botanic Garden** - leaves Schomburgk Pavilion, 10.30am daily (except Christmas and Good Friday)

**Mt Lofty Botanic Garden** - leaves lower car park, Lampert Rd, Piccadilly, 10.30am every Thursday

**Wittunga Botanic Garden** - leaves car park, Shepherds Hill Rd, Blackwood, 10.30am first Tuesday in August to end of November

### Are you running a gardening event?

For listing in *SA Garden and Outdoor Living*, contact Jon Lamb Communications [jlcom@chariot.net.au](mailto:jlcom@chariot.net.au) or send details to 891ABC gardening noticeboard.

**Join Jon Lamb for South Australia's top rating talkback gardening program every Saturday morning 8.30-10am - part of Weekends with Ashley Walsh on 891ABC Adelaide.**

## QUIZ TIME

Compiled by Ashley Walsh who presents the 891 ABC Adelaide *Toughest Quiz in Town* on weekends, Saturday 10.30 am.



### DO YOU KNOW?

(Answers at the bottom of the page)

1. What is the name of the online tool launched by the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide to help you choose the right plant or tree for your garden?
2. Are seaweed extract products a fertiliser or a soil stimulant?

3. What is the native wasp that causes calluses to form on citrus trees?
4. Lionheart, Sugarloaf and Superette are all hybrid varieties of which vegetable?
5. The weed *Oxalis pes-caprae* is better known by what name?

**Quiz answers** 1. Plant Selector+ / 2. Soil stimulant / 3. Citrus gall wasp / 4. Cabbage / 5. Sourso

## The Cedars, Hahndorf

Charming gardens and grounds surround the original home and studio of renowned Australian artist Sir Hans Heysen, as well as the studio of his daughter Nora.

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